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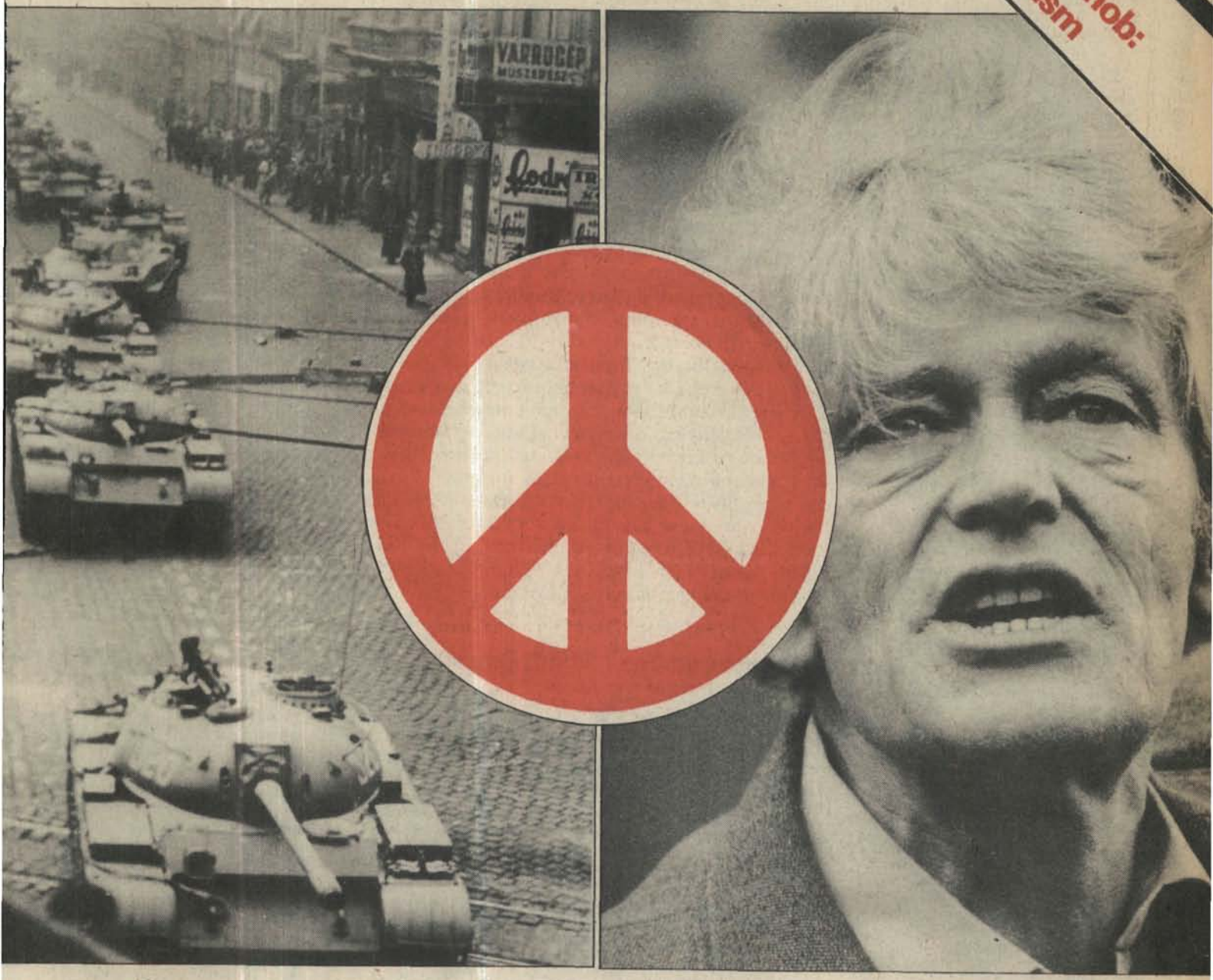
NEW STATESMAN

FESTIVALS 81

Tory vote fixing

Apartheid or lynch mob: varieties of racism



DIALOGUE with TANKS

Does nuclear disarmament mean the betrayal of East Europe's political dissidents?

E.P. THOMPSON takes up the issues in response to a letter from Czechoslovakia

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NEW STATESMAN Vol 101 No 2614 24 April 1981

E. P. Thompson replies
Is CND naive in its analysis and in its hope for an anti-nuclear movement in Eastern Europe? Is their campaign in the same tradition as the appeasement movement of the thirties? E. P. Thompson replies to Czech criticisms Page 6

The Militant
Patrick Wintour reports from their annual conference Page 5

The end of the right to strike
A recent judgment by Lord Denning is a serious threat to trades union rights Page 14

Lynch mob or apartheid?
R. W. Johnson looks at the differing forms of racism developed in response to the demands of trade and industry in America and South Africa Page 17

Arts Festivals 1981 Page 21

Shakespearan time travel
The effect of updating the setting of plays discussed by Benedict Nightingale Page 28

Diary/Woddis: p.15; Letters: p.16; Books/Arts: pp.17-30; Weekend Competition: p.30.

Arthur Marshall will be back next week.

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Mrs Thatcher and Mr Sands

TO MRS THATCHER, publicly anyway, all is simple. Crime is crime, and Bobby Sands MP is a criminal.

But the truth is that crime is not crime unless it is judged to be such by the consensus of a human community, and has been certified by the ordinary process of law. Bobby Sands was condemned by a 'Diplock court', which alters the relationship between state and individual so profoundly that it ceases to be a legal institution, and becomes a political one.

To dislike, even to loathe the politics represented by Sands is one thing: but to assert that he is merely a criminal is something altogether more dangerous. An assertion so remote from the consensual judgment of a community is one that can be imposed on it only by military means: and, de facto, Britain's policy towards the Catholics of Northern Ireland is a policy of warfare.

True, that policy derives from understandable fears of a Protestant backlash, not from specifically martial enthusiasm. But that does not make it necessarily less dangerous: if wars never happened except by conscious choice, the world would be a fairly peaceful place.

The central reality is that Britain is not likely to win an Irish war — which is the real price of a policy asserting the merely criminal character of the IRA. Sooner or later, a 'Diplock prisoner' will die, and that alone will guarantee the flow of Irish-American money that supports the guerrillas.

Guerrillas, of course, *can* be defeated: they occupy many of history's unmarked graves. But in this case, the military and political cost runs finally higher than anything the British population will underwrite: not because they are a nation of cowards, but because the bigotry of Ulster's Protestant leadership long ago forfeited their allegiance.

Mrs Thatcher's government acquired some honour by resolving, at long last, the Rhodesian impasse. In Ireland, their course is less propitious: unless public attitudes are a mask for some subtler development, they are likely to run up political bills much larger than anything that can be paid.

No prospect exists of 'solving' the Ulster problem through British means alone. Somehow, it will have to be internationalised, through the assistance of America and of Britain's European partners (the United Kingdom, because of its historical involvement, cannot guarantee one Ulster community without appearing to repress the other). But this possibility, already a difficult one, becomes more remote with each escalation of violence.

Mrs Thatcher is right in one judgment: that many lives are in jeopardy. But she cannot save those lives by making incantation a substitute for policy. □

John Palmer reports from Brussels on Europe's anti-nuclear movement

Putting NATO chiefs on the defensive

THE EASTER demonstration outside NATO headquarters in Brussels provided ample proof that the nuclear disarmament movement has 'gone European'. Whatever their personal attitudes to the EEC, it has been members of British CND — and its offshoot, the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign — who have provided much of the momentum for this.

Naturally, the largest of 12 national contingents was provided by the Dutch. The cause of nuclear disarmament, and specifically of opposition to the deployment of Cruise and Pershing tactical nuclear missiles has advanced further in the Netherlands than anywhere else. A broadly based movement ranging from the pacifist Socialist Party, through the Labour Party, many centrist MPs and serving soldiers to the Protestant Churches has succeeded in forcing the Christian Democrat-Liberal right-wing coalition, led by Andries Van Agt, to refuse to have Cruise missiles sited on Dutch soil.

Whatever the outcome of the general election in a few weeks' time, it is unlikely that the Dutch government will change its mind.

Dutch opposition has undoubtedly stiffened resistance in Belgium. The Flemish wing of the Socialist Party — which shares power with the local Christian Democrats — has forced an indefinite delay in Belgian approval for Cruise, even though a site has been prepared for the missiles. That leaves Italy, West Germany — and of course Mrs Thatcher's Britain — still committed to the original NATO decision.

Although the German delegation on the march was not big, NATO military chiefs are worried about the growing support for nuclear disarmament in that country. Chancellor Schmidt is concerned that the SPD may impose very tough conditions on accepting Cruise at this year's party conference. And it was with Germany in mind that Reagan aides have been deploring the spread of 'better Red than dead' sentiment.

Interestingly, support for the Anti-nuclear case seems weakest in France (which is not integrated in NATO's military command) and Italy — which has the largest communist party in Western Europe. However, it became clear at Brussels that 1981 will be a year of increasingly coordinated campaigning throughout Europe — with a march from Copenhagen to Paris organised by Norwegian Women for Peace being just one of a number of activities crossing national frontiers.

Pro-nuclear strategists are somewhat at a loss about how to hit back. It is difficult for them to smear campaigners with a pro-Moscow bias if only because END and its supporters are as resolutely opposed to the Soviet SS 20 missiles as they are to Cruise, and because many of the groups have links with dissidents in East European countries.

But the counter-offensive is bound to be stepped up later this year when NATO chiefs will have to assess the prospects of meeting the original deadline of 570 missiles in place by 1983. The campaigners know this and will be concentrating on ways of improving the still rather haphazard and chaotic coordination of their movements — at a European-level conference to be held in Bradford on 16 May. □

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Michael Coren explains how he was paid to be a bogus delegate to the Tories' student conference

The neo-fascists in the Thatcher ranks

'THE MOST corrupt and unpleasant conference I have ever attended' was how one leading moderate described last week's Federation of Conservative Students' conference in Sheffield. Some branches are considering disaffiliation on the grounds that the conference was openly fixed, that violence and intimidation were used for political ends and that there were neo-fascist delegates present.

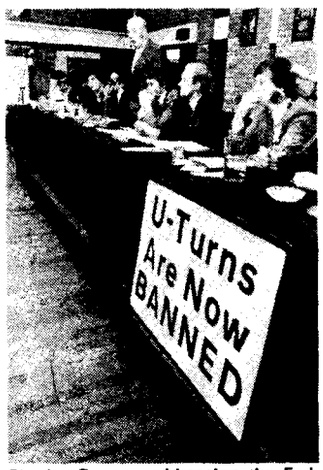
The FCS is the official Tory youth organisation. It holds regular meetings with cabinet ministers — Rhodes Boyson spoke at last week's conference — and is the recognised springboard into national Tory politics. Currently it is divided between the 'Sound' majority who are broadly Thatcherite and the 'Wet' minority who identify with the Tory Reform Group and Edward Heath.

The outgoing chairman, Peter Young, was worried that the 'left' might regain control of the Federation and persuaded some businessmen to put up money to help prevent this happening. Young was given my name by some people with whom I was at college and rang me several weeks ago to ask me to be a delegate to the conference.

At first when I arrived at Sheffield I was told that I was representing an obscure college of further educatin but later I became the delegate for Ulster Polytechnic: I have no connections with either of these establishments nor, indeed, with the Conservative Party.

Young gave me £22 cash for the registration fee and, in addition, I was able to claim £30 expenses. In return I was expected to support the right-wing slate for the FCS executive. According to one of Young's supporters the number of FCS associations doubled in the week preceding the conference, though not all the rigging came from the right. On the day of the elections forty young Conservatives from Yorkshire were bussed in to vote for the moderate candidates.

One complete day of the conference was devoted to allegations of embezzlement by the 'Neasden Group'. This group of 'leftwingers',



Rhodes Boyson addressing the Federation of Conservative Students last week.

who control some of the local associations, is accused of using money allocated by the FCS nationally to finance its alternative programme and structure. Votes of censure followed each other with monotonous regularity and the air is now thick with writs.

THE PREVAILING MOOD of the conference was aggressively and abusively right-wing. Whenever 'wets' made a speech there were frequent chants of 'communist pervert' or 'queer'. When the Conservative Campaign for Homosexuality's stall was left unattended it was vandalised. On the final night of the conference a gang of drunken rightwingers tried to gate-crash an 'alternative' cabaret put on by the left. Repulsed, they moved off elsewhere: one student from Herriot-Watt University vandalised the car of a left-wing student, an offence he admitted when sober in the morning, but for which the predominantly right-wing national committee did not censure him.

The most unsavoury aspect of the whole event was the racism. Although the national chairman denied several accusations that members of the National Front were present, there is no doubt that one skinhead youth wearing a black shirt and large Union Jack paraded around nonchalantly and unchallenged. Nor is there any doubt that one particularly tasteless joke from the platform ended with the line: 'A well-whipped member of the Brixton society.'

At the private parties, the Scottish FCS song-book, banned nationally, was used constantly and the Hitler Youth anthem was sung 'as a joke'. A favourite melody was sung to the tune of the Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall:*

> We don't need no coons and niggers, we don't need no David Lane
> All in all it's just another wog on the dole

Four years ago the *New Statesman* reported on the FCS conference at Egham, when they sang 'We will knive all socialists, the socialists must be stabbed' to the tune of the *Eton Boating Song and*

> How much is that Trotsky in the window?
> The one with the axe in his head
> I'm so glad that Trotsky is dead, is dead

What will the 'MPs and the cabinet ministers of the future' be singing in four years' time? □

Example of sticker much in evidence in Sheffield

Andrew Brown reveals the plans for the post-nuclear NHS

Death can be bad for morale

DOCTORS will have to use herbs as drugs following a nuclear attack on Britain as the main stockpiled drugs could be exhausted within days of an attack. This is the conclusion of a confidential war plan for the health service drawn up by the East Anglia Regional Health Authority.

Much of the plan is taken up with a 20-page guide to herbal remedies. For heart failure, for example, it recommends digitalis purpurea — better known as Foxglove — which can be found on the eastern coastal strip of the region. You can use 60 to 100 mg of dried powered leaf, but the activity will be very variable, according to the document.

For high blood pressure after a nuclear attack try mistletoe — which in the right season can be found scattered throughout Cambridge and Suffolk. If you take 2 to 6 grams of powdered leaves thrice daily, it should have an effect after three or four days.

For disorders of the central nervous system try Avena Satura — oats: 0.6 to 2 grams in a 1:1 liquid extract in 25 per cent alcohol could not only help but, according to the war plan, help counteract the effects of nicotine and narcotics.

The general picture the plan paints of life after the bomb is all too familiar, corresponding as it does to the future described in all secret civil service memos on the subject.

Like other government departments DHSS will be involved in various covert activities before the bomb drops, updating plans, allocating staff and requisitioning supplies of drugs and equipment. The regulars of the Duck and Drake public house in the village of Yaxley, Huntingdon don't know yet but their pub will be taken over by the health service in time of war, according to the even more specific plan for the Cambridgeshire area.

After the bomb there will be masses of people — at first shocked and apathetic, later depressed — looking for shelter and food. Morale will be sapped by widespread looting and outbreaks of epidemic disease. So, though the prospects of survival for severely injured persons are poor, 'both on humanitarian grounds and for the purpose of maintaining morale', attempts 'would be made to rescue as many survivors as possible.'

Nevertheless, there will be communal feeding, outbreaks of dysentery and other infections. Supplies of drugs would be exhausted 'within days or weeks', water would be contaminated. But do not be downcast: 'the presence of unburied bodies would have a more serious effect on morale than on public health'. However, it is hard to know what the precise effect on morale would be of the bonfires of corpses, or burying them in debris.

Morale would do also be undermined, the document opines, as people were turned away from hos-

pitals, though instructions on personal cleanliness and hygiene would be the main defence against lice, fleas and mice. As the document cheerfully concludes:

> Two or three weeks after the nuclear attack a situation might arise in which hundreds of thousands of people were living in grossly overcrowded and often temporary accommodation, on a dull and barely adequate diet, on an inadequate and potentially contaminated water supply and in insanitary conditions worse than those found in the poorest and most crowded areas of the under-developed countries. □

Barry Wilson on the coming butter famine

Britain's secret trade with Russia

THE COMMON MARKET has run out of butter. Officially there is only a modicum of 'concern' but in private the officials cross their well-manicured fingers and hope for a lot more early sun, which should have the euro-cows doing their stuff again. Meanwhile the New Zealand Dairy Board is gleefully predicting that supplies could dry up completely in Britain in the next few weeks if the EEC's frenetic export drive is allowed to continue.

In recent years, as the EEC produced an annual butter surplus of over 800,000 tonnes exports ▶

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Mike Phillips examines the prospect for economic reconstruction in Brixton

The danger of outsiders moving in for the money

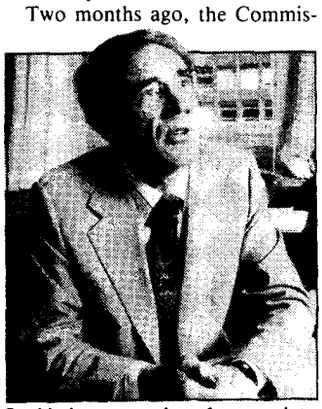
IN THE CENTRE OF BRIXTON, shopkeepers have been checking over their stock, filing insurance claims and trying to repair damaged premises. In the area known as the 'Frontline' (which incurred *some of the worst of the riot damage*), residents have been trying to decide what opportunities the rebuilding process may bring to the community.

On Tuesday, a group of Frontline traders put forward three lines of development they wanted to see pursued. First, they wanted a general programme of economic development throughout the area. Secondly, they wanted subsidies to initiate profit-making leisure projects, such as clubs for young people. And thirdly they wanted funds for co-operative business ventures, such as the importation of popular lines of foodstuffs from the Caribbean.

In the present economic climate, even these relatively modest demands have a flavour of fantasy. But if the traders can find the correct formulae for their presentation, they may get what they want. This, at least, is the implication of proposals now being put to government and private industry by David Lane, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality.

The proposals pre-date the riots (although they are now being pressed more urgently) and, like so many of the CRE's recent initiatives, they are inspired by the inner city policies of government agencies in the United States. Peter Tucker, Chief Executive of the CRE, first touted them on his return from a visit to the States six months ago. He was impressed, in particular, with a number of schemes for delivering capital to *black businesses in deprived areas* — and it was to Hackney, East London, that the CRE first looked to develop the idea.

Two months ago, the Commission held a conference of black organisations to canvass their support for widening the scheme — the 'Hackney Business Venture' — and for encouraging blacks to make use of it. Black businessmen and others who want to start up in business have extraordinary difficulties acquiring loans or any kind of initial capital from banks. The Business Venture offered a special guarantee to black entrepreneurs and organisations, in the hope that banks would accept this in lieu of collateral. (Coincidentally, Chancellor Howe, in his last budget, came up with a very similar scheme for small businesses generally, involving a government guarantee and clearing bank loans.)



David Lane, turning fantasy into reality

Where the black communities are concerned, it is intended that these schemes should be labour-intensive, and dovetail into the present network of black self-help organisations in British cities. This is what the CRE is most likely to propose for Brixton; and in many ways it is closer to the desires of the West Indian community, and to its system of organisation, than other CRE schemes advanced so far.

The *Sunday Times* this week gave the West Indian community an editorial backhander, ascribing a large part of the Brixton problem to 'West Indian attitudes' to self-help, implying that West Indians were not interested in such matters. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most West Indians arrived in this country at a time when the economy was already contracting, and with no capital or business skills. Nevertheless, they constructed a formidable network of self-help organisations — and it was only because funds were mostly unavailable to blacks for business purposes that most of these self-help projects were hostels and such-like, based on public funding. Even so, a number of profitable West Indian businesses have been established — in hairdressing, for example — where labour rather than capital was the major resource required.

Until now, the establishment of projects to provide jobs and training in Brixton has been left to the Inner City Partnership, which provides funds for voluntary agencies thought to be catering for such needs in inner city areas. Under the Partnership scheme, the government provides 75 per cent of the money and the local authority provides the rest. In the borough of Lambeth (of which Brixton is a part), the Partnership presently dispenses a little over £1 million a year to black voluntary projects. But this is seen as a drop in the bucket by the Consortium of Ethnic Minority Organisations, a group of 48 black and Asian projects in the area, which meets to agree priorities and proposals for funding. They are asking for a further £350,000 next year to start ten new projects.

The CRE, which is not involved with the Consortium, probably has a better chance than anyone else of initiating and controlling a scheme along the lines of the Hackney Business Venture. However, Consortium members argue that if this is implemented without prior consultation with them, they will refuse to support it, on the grounds that it would create a business class within the community whose preliminary loyalties would lie with the source of the bank loans.

Fears that this is precisely what will happen have been heightened by the steadfast refusal of government ministers to talk to locals about resources. The Consortium wrote to Mrs Thatcher two months ago, asking to discuss a plan for redevelopment in the area; they were rewarded with a note from Michael Heseltine, warning them that there would be no concessions.

Demands for resources from the Brixton community are characteristically associated with the prospects of jobs and training for young people, and with the need to have more money spread more widely. There is a danger that businesses which will now be encouraged may not be labour intensive, nor provide relevant training, and that resources may be concentrated in the hands of people who are relatively distant from the community. □

▶ boomed. Last year exports were almost 650,000 tonnes and this year they have been running at nearly twice this level. As a result, EEC intervention stocks are under 40,000 tonnes, and it is believed that all of this is contracted for sale to Poland. Previously, stocks at this time of year have been around 300,000 tonnes.

Most exported butter still goes to the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. The British feel more strongly about this than anyone else in the EEC: Peter Walker, the farm minister, has lectured the French and the Commission on the evils of feeding the Afghan invaders.

But Mr Walker should study his own backyard. Britain is now a major exporter of butter. This year we will export over 60,000 tonnes: more than a third of total production, most of it from the Milk Marketing Board of England and Wales (which now controls two-thirds of the nation's butter-making capacity). Via private traders (which the MMB will not name) and Rotterdam, most of the butter ends up in those unmentionable regions east of Vienna.

Demand in these areas, Iran and elsewhere has pushed the world butter price up by 50 per cent in the last 12 months to nearly £1,200 a tonne. Although the EEC has reduced its butter subsidy since Christmas from £1,000 a tonne to under £650, most of the exports since have attracted the larger export refund because canny exporters applied for prefixed refunds at the earlier higher levels. □

Paul Chapman exposes British opposition to a human right

The BBC is perfectly OK

THE BRITISH government and the BBC have opposed moves to add the 'Right to Communicate' to the Europe Convention on Human Rights. The proposal has been made by a committee of the Council of Europe — Project 6 — which was set up by the Council because of their concern that technical innovations — such as satellites and cable T.V. — would intensify the centralisation and commercialism of broadcasting, with damaging political and cultural effects.

The committee's proposals say that the Right to Communicate is

> a direct corollary of the right to Freedom of Expression . . . such a right would imply the possibility for every citizen to have access to the electronic mass media and to make active use of them.

This, of course, means that

> Broadcasting institutions must intensify their efforts to decentralise their structures and resources . . . in order to foster cultural democracy in the electronic communication field.

These proposals were presented to European broadcasting officials in Charleroi this March and Europe's cultural ministers will discuss them on 5 May — Britain's Paul Channon will be there. At Charleroi Britain was represented by Tony Butler, the civil servant in charge of broadcasting planning, and Michael Starks of the BBC. According to Sean MacReamoinn of Radio Telefis Eireann, for the British the proposals were 'like a red rag to a bull.' Two EEC officials present at the meeting have confirmed the British opposition.

Butler now says he is still considering the matter and Starks refuses to comment, though the BBC say they are already accountable and democratic and they would not favour a 'Right to Communicate 'because it had political overtones'. Ironically, they have an ally in Mr Losev of the Russian newspaper, Tass, who opposed the adoption of the 'Right to Communicate' as a human right at a recent UNESCO conference. □

NEXT WEEK

The third article in Duncan Campbell's series *The Unauthorised History of the British Bomb* has had to be held over until next week because of the large space (rightly) consumed by E.P. Thompson's *Dialogue with Tanks. Unauthorised History III,* which deals with the plans for employing Britain's nukes, is a substantial piece, and far too good to be slashed immoderately.

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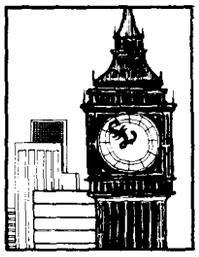

Patrick Wintour

Marxism and the petrol bomb

IT WAS EQUIVALENT to sending Enoch Powell on a peace-keeping mission to Railton Road. On the platform in Bridlington was John Golding, to give fraternal greetings from the Labour Party National Executive to the 20th conference of the party's Young Socialists. Golding saw the mischief in the NEC's choice of an Easter messenger: he sat there winking and smiling to his wife, who happened to have the seat beside mine. For Golding is the Militant Tendency's pet monster, and Militant wholly dominate the LPYS. Golding has consistently advocated their expulsion, and last year he tried to sue their paper.

Rising to speak, he received a prolonged bout of dead silence, and there was a similar zero-decibel count when he sat down. Betweenwhiles, he attempted to rile the assembled cadres into uncomradely heckling. He called Engels a Manchester businessman and exploiter, Marx a German academic, and Trotsky a Russian revolutionary who likewise had no experience of the British labour movement.

He portrayed himself as the champion of conference decisions, and pointed out that Militant had ignored most of them. The next Labour government, he said, so far from implementing Clause Four in a single session, would construct a prosperous mixed economy. But the Militants restrained themselves, even when he said they must realise that most people took less interest in politics then they did: that for many people, it should be no more than a hobby, like gardening or fishing.

BY NO MEANS all of the NEC loathe the Militants so intensely. Most prefer to ignore the topic, in the hope it will fade away. Others, like Eric Clarke — whom the LPYS invited as a counter to Golding's embassy — say that a bit of rebelliousness is only natural among youngsters. He promised the conference that he would try to get more money for the LPYS, and declared that policy differences between Militant and the NEC were 'infinitesimal'.

Up to a point, Eric. Over Easter, the LPYS passed (unanimously) motions calling for: a 32-hour week; trade unions in the army and police force; abolition of the monarchy and House of Lords; recognition of the futility of charities under capitalism; nationalisation of the top four car firms, of the leisure industry, the textile industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the entire energy programme, and — additionally — the top 200 companies.

These are not necessarily disreputable goals, but Militant provides no vision of how such a programme might work in detail or how it might be made popular. (One delegate, at least, was left wondering about what impact the programme might make on his council estate.) This failing results from a monocausal world-view, in which the only source of oppression is the workplace, and class the only political influence. The Militant world contains no light and shade: no consideration of morality, or cultural oppression.

THUS, THE Tendency is less than irresistible to most young people: nominally, the Young Socialists' chief constituency. As one ex-Militant told a fringe meeting:

> Militant don't want young people from the Anti-Nazi League or CND. They only want the most advanced sections of the working-class.

And complex gymnastics were required at the weekend to enable Militant to grapple with five principal areas of modern left-wing concern: nuclear war, racism, sexual politics, Afghanistan and Poland.

There is, you will be glad to hear, 'no immediate threat of nuclear war', because wars are only 'fought by capitalists for markets, raw-materials etc', and anyway the working-class is 'too strong'. Thus NATO membership and the siting of cruise missiles are just marginal issues, and CND merely a 'home of vicars and liberals'.

But not even Militant could ignore this Easter's events in Britain and Europe. So, at the last moment, the LPYS national committee decided to affiliate with the vicars and liberals. (According to the chairman, this proposal had been excluded from the conference statement on world peace because of a 'typing error'.)

Similarly, the debate on racism was rich in put-downs of the Anti-Nazi League, which was said to have declined through insufficient attention to class-consciousness. Several speakers celebrated their own movement's successful post-Brixton intervention: this success being calibrated in terms of leaflets distributed. And this debate produced the weekend's most odious rostrum statement, denouncing any who might sympathise with the plight of the Met: 'Workers in uniform? Rubbish! Petrol bomb the police!'

Amid much other unreality, the statement went without challenge. On matters of sexual repression, Militant are fractionally more sophisticated, but they still bitterly resist the idea of a separate LPYS conference for women, or any other form of separate organisation. Homosexuality, due to 'pressure of time', is not allowed into LPYS debates: even if it were, one feels, it would only be nationalised.

MILITANT'S TIMETABLE for world revolution — as frequently adjusted as British Rail's — now requires some curious international attitudes. No LPYS motions were submitted on Afghanistan, but *Militant*, the newspaper, has moved to a position of broad, if ambiguous support for the Soviet invasion. Socialism, after all, can be imposed on people, for as one thoughtful article explains, the

> introduction of economic planning and other progressive reforms will create more and more of a mass basis of support for the (Moscow-backed) regime.

And Militant's position on Poland, as given in an executive statement at the conference, is more remarkable still. Many of Solidarity's supporters, it appears, are merely a liberal wing of the bureaucracy, who err in calling merely for the reform of the regime, rather than its overthrow by the workers. A Soviet invasion might not be unwelcome, since it

> would almost certainly lead to a civil war in which the bulk of the army . . . would fight on the side of the workers. Such a civil war, even if it resulted initially in a bloody defeat of the Polish workers, would have enormous repercussions throughout Eastern Europe.

These charmless notions are clothed in a dated 'Marxist' rhetoric: history will never give us a day off from the struggle for socialism, we must deepen our international credentials, we must become the hangman of the Tories, etc etc. Ted Grant, the man who founded Militant in 1963, is the arch-exponent of this style, and was much in evidence as the oldest Young Socialist in town.

His prophetic addresses on the long period in the wilderness — assumed now to be drawing to a close — are decorated with the well-known Militant platform trademark of violent handpumping. Occasionally, by way of variation, he throws out his right arm and wiggles his fingers, as if trying to remove a piece of Elastoplast. The effect would be comic, but for the fact that the *Militant* readers' rally rewards him with 700 faces watching in a slogan-sodden rapture that the CPSU itself might envy.

Does Militant matter? Does tight organisation, plus repetitious fundamentalism win supporters? They control all the LPYS national committee, elected regionally, and tightened their grip last weekend, with 235 delegates in support. The remaining 43 were a mix of unaligned, *Tribuneites* and members of Workers' Action, a more libertarian Trotskyist group.

They claim 8,000 LPYS members, 400 branches, and a doubling in the circulation of their monthly paper. But as one non-Militant Trot pointed out, even 8,000 Young Socialist activists would be a disaster. In the sixties, there were 20,000. Their fanaticism, in short, is a constraint upon the left in a period which should be one of expansion.

What (in Lenin's phrase) is to be done? Expulsion, the solution proposed by the Railwaymen, would be wrong, even though it is a matter of moments to show that some Militants are in a clandestine organisation with its own international.

The majority of Militant's members are entirely democratic, and entirely sincere. Some of them are genuine union activists. What would be helpful, immediately, would be for some distinguished Labour left-wingers to inform themselves on the 'policies' that Militant's rank and file are being persuaded to support, and then summon the courage to criticise.

Peter Kellner is on holiday.

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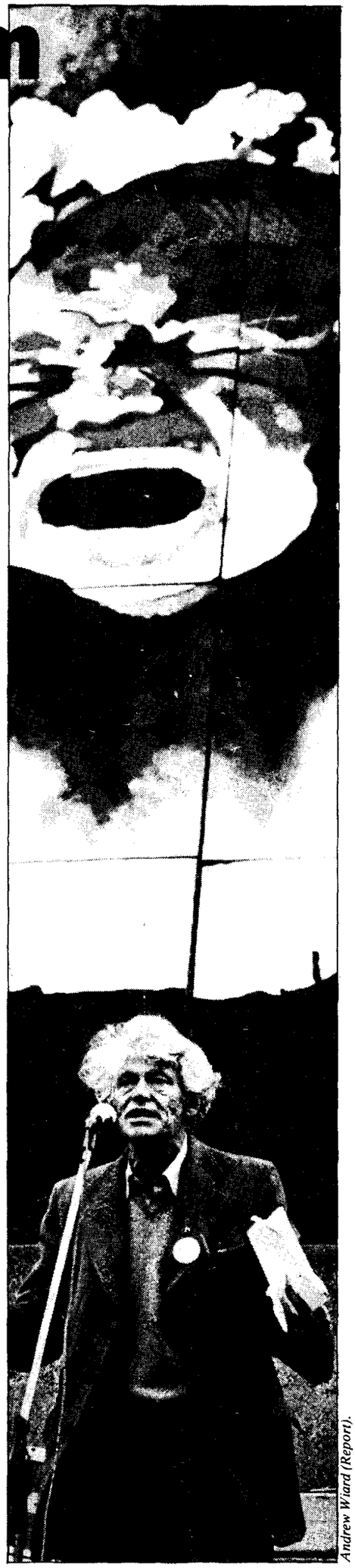
Freedom and the Bomb

No one man, and certainly no one magazine article can start a political movement. Yet few people would deny E. P. Thompson's central role in the rebuilding of the British movement against nuclear weapons — and of its extension into a European dimension. Nor can it be doubted that one of the vital early texts of the campaign was his long article, *An Alternative to Doomsday,* which appeared in the Christmas 1979 double-edition of the *New Statesman*.

This week we give over to EDWARD THOMPSON (see right), an amount of space we have never before devoted to a single issue in a single edition. We do this because Edward Thompson is addressing himself in detail to the most critical political question which faces the anit-nuclear movement: *What about Eastern Europe?*

We begin by printing a letter from 'Václav Racek', which is the name of an anti-Soviet dissident in Czechoslovakia, whose real identity, for obvious reasons, must be concealed. Racek says to Thompson that the aim of a nuclear-free Europe is both naive and impossible: that but for the nuclear armoury of the West, and the pressure that it exerts upon the Soviet leaders, their totalitarian system will crush what vestigial liberties exist in the East, and will extend itself to the demolition of liberty everywhere. The letter was written last year, as a result of a trip made by Thompson to Prague, during which tentative efforts were made to discuss questions of nuclear disarmament: much delay, though, has been caused by the circuitous means required to sanction publication.

That very fact indicates the fragile, fragmentary and dangerous nature of any true East-West dialogue on the question of nuclear deterrence. We can only thank 'Václav Racek' for the courage that he brings to a predicament immeasurably worse than any that we must contend with.



Andrew Wiard (Report).

Prague, 12 December 1980

Dear Edward Thompson,

I have learnt about your visit to Prague, and of the unexpected course which it took for you. I am convinced of your sincere desire to co-operate with civic activities in our country, and so I have decided to explain to you the reasons for the reaction which you met here.

I was pleased by your wish to read the arguments which show, conclusively, that your analysis (the ground of your expectations for co-operation with some similar movement in our country) is wrong. Your analysis as to 'the gathering determinism of the exterminist process' assumed an identity of involvement of both superpowers in the process. I cannot accept this, nor the direction of your argument.

You view the interrelation of both the superpowers as it is manifested in their armaments as

> a situation both of antagonism and of reciprocity, for the increment of weaponry on both sides takes place in part according to a reciprocal logic and is even regulated by elaborate agreed rules.

But it is then by no means unimportant that, despite this, you consider the Soviet superpower somewhat partially. You draw the conclusion that 'the incremental thrust in the Soviet Union is not aggressive and invasive, but is ideological and bureaucratic', and 'overwhelmingly defensive'. But you don't concern yourself with any complex analysis of possible connections between ideology and bureaucracy on the one hand, and aggression with invasion on the other. As a consequence you can then call the undeniable facts of aggression and invasion merely 'dangerous inertial push, with its own hawkish imperatives of ideology and strategy'.

But a true analysis of such interconnections in totalitarian regimes shows that the relation between ideology and bureaucracy and aggression and invasion is a necessary one. The source of these interrelations is exterminism based on ideology and terror: that is, ideology is something other than the mere performance of the triple functions you mentioned.

I NEED NOT demonstrate this analysis to you, since it is easily accessible. I refer to Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*[1]. Despite some modifications of the Eastern bloc's totalitarianism and of the (still reversible) abstention from genocide since the death of Stalin — as Arendt concedes and explains — it often comes, as in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Romania, Vietnam and Cuba to *the general intensification of ideological extermination by the use of power at all possible levels.*

In the words of Václav Havel, now in prison, this means the daily, quiet and inconspicuous humiliation of millions. If I may elucidate to you the situation as it is seen on 'the other side', I can say this is the realisation of Orwell's *1984*, except that the domination of this system is not world-wide.

This 'except' is a very important reality, which essentially restrains the totalitarian system from tightening the screw, and this directly concerns the preconditions for your

1. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968

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public activity. For the social system in the East is essentially different from the system you live in and criticise. But I am convinced that the fact of your public criticism of the British political system — as, for example, your statement that

> conservatives of all parties . . . have got us halfway into a managed society, whose managing-director is money and whose production manager is the police[2]

is in itself clear proof of the democratic British system, no matter how odd this may seem to you. It shows that in spite of the expanding bias of the executive branch of the government and its influence on the judicial and legislative branches, there still exists the political reality of public opinion to be respected.

Your identification of both blocs with 'exterminism' is unacceptable, and it spells a dangerous naivete, which is not exceptional in the West. Your CND peace movement, which founds itself on this theoretical naivete, seems therefore to be an unconscious analogy of the appeasement of the Thirties. You may consider this unjust, but as a historian you probably know that truth often occurs behind our backs . . .

If you consider that some peace movement similar to CND could rise in the East it is a consequential naivete whose impossibility was stressed by Roy Medvedev. But in Poland there does exist a real nonconformist mass movement. This is, characteristically, not a disarmament movement, but a movement defending and promoting human rights: that is, promoting those principles whose suppression is the precondition for totalitarianism.

Any disarmament movement is meaningful and hopeful only in the sense of the realisation of its objectives as a human rights movement. Your notion of an opposite method which should be accomplished by

> a logic of process leading towards the dissolution of both blocs . . . permitting nations in both Eastern and Western Europe to resume autonomy and political mobility

is very similar to mechanical notions of détente. This notion means, in the first place, arms limitation and economic co-operation, and its supporters in the East intend to promote mainly the economic aspects. But some spokesmen in the West expect that military and economic detente will cause detente around issues of human and civil rights. The starting point of such conceptions is the notion that the increasing rate of armaments is the cause for the suppression of human rights. Such cases may be possible in Western democracies, but the situation in totalitarian systems is the opposite.

Here, the suppression of human rights manifests itself *also* in the increase of armaments, *also* in militarism.

IF YOU SEE THIS situation inverted then it is a short-circuit, or an optical illusion, by which you judge your own situation to explain the situation in a totalitarian state. If you then, consequently, affirm that it is sufficient to

> swing those blocs off collision-course, and the blocs themselves will begin to change. The armourers and the police will begin to lose their authority . . . a new space for politics will begin to open up

then it is clear proof of your 'slight political preparation', but in a different sense than you supposed.

I understand that an increasing number of citizens in Western democracies are made anxious by watching the present growth in armaments, which directly affect their countries in a possible conflict. Yet if the movement for disarmament commences and operates with such assumptions as are expressed in your own theoretical writings then it becomes, in consequence, a very influential force which works unconsciously in the interest of a totalitarian system whose aim is world domination based on the liquidation of human rights.

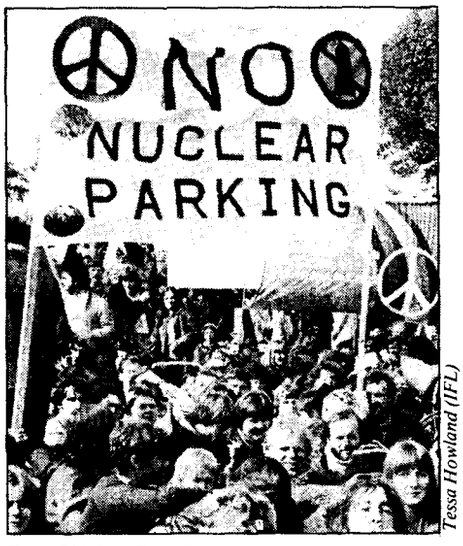
Chamberlain, after Munich, exclaimed 'I have been deceived': this was a manifestation of dismay by a man who was seeking peace, but his naivete contributed to the rise of war. In his *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx wrote that history never repeats itself except as farce. In the case of Munich, which was by definition a farce, it would obviously be such a farce squared.

I think the core of your conception is to be found in a political assumption which divides political forces into right and left wings. In this framework you concede only a division between conservatives and reactionaries and their opposites: that is, the one defines the other. Yet because of the determining character of totalitarian tendencies, movements and ruling systems, this division has become anachronistic. This dangerous anachronism is due to the fact that the determining line seems to lie between the totalitarian and democratic streams both at the left and right sides of the political spectrum.

I cannot expect that, after reading over this open letter, you will classify me as a voice of 'constructive elements in the Communist world.' But I would not like to share the perspective which you present in your *Notes on Exterminism*, and I have tried to explain why.

The purpose of my letter is to try to explain to you the silence you met with in Prague. If my, perhaps unpleasant, but sincerely intended words should contribute to a critical revision of your premises for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, then it would spell the first step to possible co-operation.

Yours sincerely,
Václav Racek



Tessa Howland (IFL)

Dear Václav Racek,

Thank you for writing. I am glad that this discussion has commenced, though it does so amid many misunderstandings.

First — a trivial matter — when my wife and I visited Prague, we met with great courtesy, and nothing occurred that was unexpected. You will understand if I do not go into details. As historians, we wished if possible to talk with fellow-members of our profession, and establish certain facts about their treatment: this was the subject of a protest, some years ago, in the journal *Past and Present*, which was supported by several British Marxist historians of international repute.

You will not be surprised to learn that we formed the opinion that the situation had changed very little; in some ways, had changed for the worse.

Also, we had hoped to talk to Czech friends about other things: about the militarisation of our continent, and common strategies to deal with it. We did have courteous and informative exchanges on this, but some doors were closed to us which we had hoped might be open.

But this, although giving us disappointment, gave us no offence. It is no business of stray Western visitors to go pushing into places where they are not wanted, nor (perhaps) to bring upon their friends the attention of the security services.

SO LET US move on to more important misunderstandings. Your letter assumes that there must be some contradiction between the cause of peace and the cause of liberty, and you clearly suspect that those who work for the first cannot be in earnest about the second. You even suppose that you have to persuade me that the social system you live under is 'essentially different' from my own, and you say that it may sound 'odd' to me to learn that my public criticism of the British political system is itself a proof of the continuing reality of our democratic process.

Why should I have to be persuaded of these things? I have written about them myself: much of my work as a historian has involved me in the examination of the sources, the realities, and the limits of our democratic process. It is because this process is now threatened, under the pressure of militarisation, that I write so sharply today.

And why should the defence of British liberties disqualify me in the eyes of Czech libertarians? Do you want liberty only for Czechs? Or only for those in Communist countries? Are there no other threats to liberty, no other kinds of 'totalitarian' regime?

One is forced to ask these hard questions by some recent statements from Russian and East European 'oppositionists'. You tell me that I have an 'inverted view' of situations. No doubt this is true: for both of us, experience is partial. I am equally astonished by the inversions in some East European vision.

I HAVE SPOKEN in East Europe with courageous men and women, whose persis-

2. *Writing by Candlelight*, 1980, p.211

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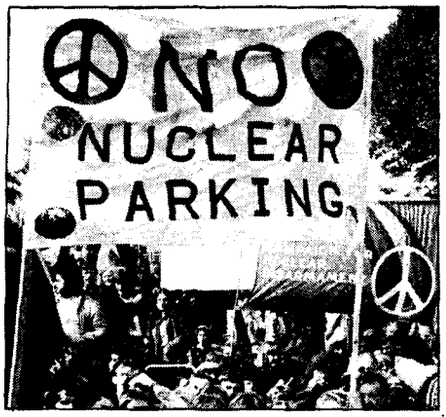

tent integrity in their daily tense confrontation with a brutal security service humbled me; and yet they had constructed in their minds a wholly illusory view of 'the other world', made up from the Voice of America and from a habit (indeed, a dogma) of believing always the opposite of whatever official propaganda stated to be so.

I have been told — to give one example — that Allende was a 'Communist dictator', overthrown by a popular general strike.

Allende was a democratically-elected President, with reformist policies, who was first 'de-stabilised' and then murdered in a military coup. The tyranny, executions, tortures, and purging of all intellectual life in Chile in the years afterwards out-rival anything seen in Eastern Europe in the past decade.

I do not say this to apologise for, or to excuse, any exercise of arbitrary (and alien) power in your own country. I intend only to illustrate this point: the Voice of America does not always tell the whole truth, and *Rude Pravo* is not always lying, even though its authors, by the use of hollow moralistic jargon, do their very best to make it seem so.

The blame for these 'inversions' lies with the propagandists who have lied so often as to make a lie of the whole world. No doubt the reports of less partial observers, like Amnesty International, do not reach you. They go astray in the post. If they should get through you will find a picture more complex than that of a 'free world' here and a 'totalitarian' world there.

I will argue, further, that you, of necessity, have the more inverted and more partial view of the world. Illness, in individuals, is not always conducive to objective views of the affairs of others: suffering can induce self-preoccupation. It is the same with nations. I take your nation to be ill, and, indeed, in a state little different from that of an oppressive occupation. How can you be other than preoccupied with your own national injuries? But the first casualty of such a condition is internationalism.

IT IS NOT easy for me to make this criticism. I know that the words which you cite of Václav Havel's are true, and I salute him in his prison. Over here we face no risks and suffer only minor discomforts. What right do we have, in the midst of our resources, to argue with you at all?

We have no such right. But, yet, we still have the duty, as intellectual communicators, to explain the truth as we understand it. If we have, through no virtue of our own, more open sources of information and more freedom of expression, then it is our duty to put these to use. Intellectual freedom has a precarious survival on this planet: where it survives it brings with it international responsibilities.

Let us turn, then, to the central matter of your letter. You commence your discussion with a serious misunderstanding: indeed, with a direct misquotation.

You attribute to me the view that Soviet militarism is 'overwhelmingly defensive'. In fact I used these words, within quotation-marks, in the course of three pages of critique attacking exactly this proposition. Perhaps this difficulty has arisen as a result of mistranslation?

I have argued, on the contrary, that there is no such thing as a 'defensive' nuclear weapon. These are weapons of menace, targeted for attack, capable of inflicting mass extermination; however accurately they are targeted, they will inflict hideous 'collateral' damage. As I wrote in those same pages, the notion that nuclear weapons can be 'basically defensive' (whether for West or East)

> is no more than a moralistic attribution of supposed intention. Both superpowers are mounted and armed for instant annihilating attack.

Nuclear weapons may be justified within a theory of 'deterrence', but this is not the same as self-defence. And they are so justified, in almost identical terms, by the military and political spokesmen of both blocs. Both blocs talk in terms of military 'balance', of matching each other's weaponry at every level (but every level is higher with every passing year), and (in their saner moments) of 'arms control' which is, however, nothing to do with disarmament but concerns only the reciprocal regulation of the never-ending upwards thrust.

What commenced as a 'rational' contest is acquiring its own irrational dimensions

IN ONE SENSE this is a futile exercise, since sufficient weaponry exists already to destroy both East and West Europe, utterly and beyond recovery, thirty times over. One might suppose that, for effective 'deterrence', once would have been enough. In another sense it is (like so much in political history) a contest for 'face', an exercise in sybolism.

But this is not symbolism *only*. This language is made up of actual weapons, which, with each passing year become more hideous. And what we, in the peace movement of Western Europe, have been signalling to you urgently is that we may be coming to a point of no return. The opposed blocs are set on a collision-course, and we may be close, already, to that terminus. What commenced as a 'rational' contest of rival national interests is now acquiring its own irrational dimensions. New factors have entered the situation, and, in particular, two.

First (and this was the theme of my 'Notes') militarisation has entered deeply into the structures of both opposed societies. The research and development of new weapons proceeds according to its own logic, and independently of the supposed occasions in political and ideological conflict. It is not only that skills and resources are diverted to the weapons-system-complex (and its attendant security and policing); this complex becomes, in its turn, the source of strategic, political and ideological forces. I did not argue for the *identity* of these forces, which find differing bases and expressions in Communist state bureaucracy and in Western 'free enterprise' (whose customer remains the state), but for the *reciprocal logic* of this 'exterminist' process.

Second, for both political and technical reasons (the increasing accuracy of new weaponry), the old theory of 'deterrence' — which was MAD or 'Mutual Assured Destruction' — is now wearing threadbare, and new strategies are visible in which nuclear war is becoming 'thinkable', and is even being planned for. Such strategies, which have long been canvassed in the Pentagon, include the notions of 'counterforce' and of 'limited' or 'theatre' nuclear war.

Europe (East and West together) is the most probable such 'theatre'. NATO rehearsed such a war in its 1977 exercises. In response to a supposed scenario of attack upon Western Germany by Soviet 'conventional' forces, General Alexander Haig signed the order for a limited nuclear first strike upon airfields and supply-lines in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. It was then supposed that the Russians called off their conventional attack, and an armistice was agreed; although many military advisers have warned that it is more probable that *any* nuclear attack will lead on, swiftly, to total nuclear exchange.

The point is that it is politically and strategically acceptable to some United States advisors to consider (and even to make plans and weaponry for) a 'theatre' war in Europe, which they suppose that the USA might 'win' with little damage on its own continent — and that such advisers are now clustered around President Reagan and his new administration.

I find that you, and many other Eastern European defenders of human rights do not even wish to enter a discussion of these matters, although they are very fully documented. You close off any discussion — indeed, any attention to the evidence — by accusing us of 'appeasement' and by throwing suspicion upon our motives. I find the first argument to be mistaken; the second I must confess to find unpleasant.

You propose a binary view of the world: there is Communist 'totalitarianism' here and the 'free West' there; and allegiance to one or the other must entail assent to the military strategies of either bloc. Why is this? Are there no other possibilities? Has history ever been as tidy as that?

You rest your case upon Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, to which you attribute biblical authority. It is your *Das Kapital*. I have long become bored with such doctrinaire absolutisms, whether 'Marxist' or 'anti-Marxist', which

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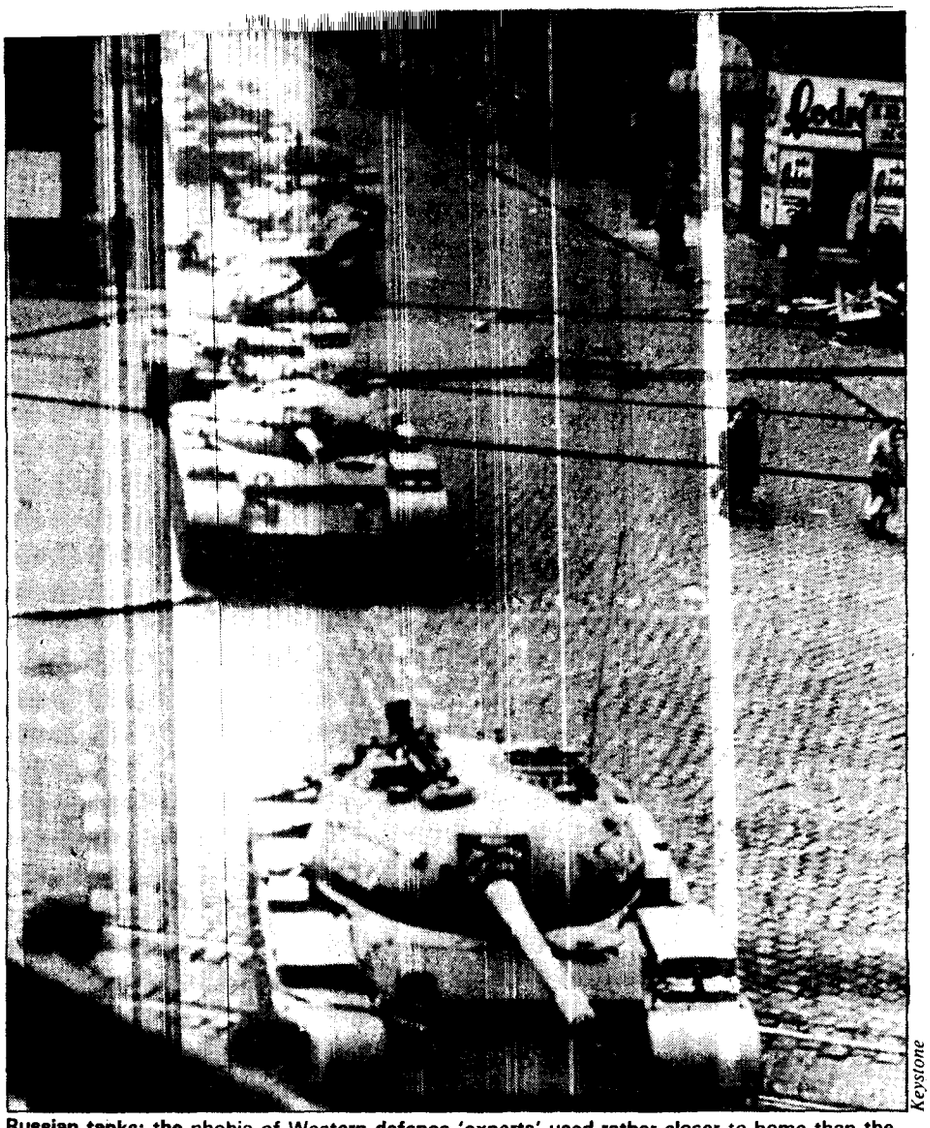

Keystone

Russian tanks: the phobia of Western defence 'experts' used rather closer to home than the Channel ports, in Hungary 1956

refuse to allow evidence into the dialogue with evidence. (I would send you my *The Poverty of Theory*, if I did not know that it would go astray in the post). You refuse to discuss the manifest evidence of the militarisation of our continent today because (some years ago) Hannah Arendt wrote a book which did not discuss it.

Yes, I would like to discuss the strength and limitations of Arendt's views, in a seminar in London or across a café table in Prague. That is one of the things (I hope) that we may both work for together. And I would argue with you two things. First, the 'idea' of Communism is more contradictory than you suggest: it holds in tension both 'totalitarian' and democratic elements. The Prague Spring, as well as certain Eurocommunist tendencies today (as in Italy and Spain) testify to the democratic elements.

Second, I would argue, as a historian, that even the best of philosphers oversimplify the historical event. You hang the whole of Communist history, like a line of washing, upon the clothes-line of ideology. But, however influential ideas may be, these are diverted in actuality to a multitude of other events in material and cultural life, all of which, taken together, compose the historical event.

Your notion of the Communist idea (or ideology) is singularly pure: a malevolent ill-will, decisively committed to the suppression of all human rights, the author of militarism and of ideological extermination, and driven towards 'world domination'. It is not difficult to understand why a Czech intellectual may think in this way.

But, even in the case of Czechoslovakia, one wonders if the explanation is not overly theoretic? In the accounts I have read of the repression of the Prague Spring (for example, Mlynar's *Night Frost in Prague*), the operative motives of the Soviet military and of Warsaw Pact political bureaucrats appear to have had a more pragmatic character. They were concerned, as in the 'Brezhnev doctrine', to maintain, for reasons of strategic *realpolitik*, a ring of client states around the Soviet borders: to hold, at all costs, the gains of World War II.

NO DOUBT A GLOSS was put upon this action in the rhetoric of solidarity with 'fraternal socialist peoples' and the world-wide cause of Communism. But this rhetoric may mean little, and may be a less effective motive than you suppose. In Czechoslovakia, as in Afghanistan, it took a poor second place to pragmatic strategic and political considerations, considerations which turned upon the contest between the two blocs (with the fear of a Chinese-US military alliance as a further factor).

It is, once again, a reciprocal and reactive process, in which there are always at least two agents, and it cannot be explained by recourse to the simple working out of a malevolent ideology. And I think you have fallen into another, more serious, over-logical assumption.

You assume that because the Western world is more free that *therefore* it must be more peaceful, and that its statesmen must act only with defensive intent. This is a deceptive *non-sequitur*.

Some of the earliest experiments in democracy arose within the heart of empires: the Athenian federation, Republican Rome. As a British citizen I am entitled to remind you of an example nearer in time. Nineteenth-century Britain saw very remarkable extensions of the suffrage, and assertions of liberties of press, speech, belief, organisation, and trade union rights. It was a nice country to live in, most of all for intellectuals, and exiles from continental tyrannies chose it by preference. It was in the British Museum (you will remember) that one of these exiles researched *Das Kapital*. But Britain throughout that century was an expansionist empire, consolidating its power in India and South-East Asia, and taking nearly a half-share in Africa.

A prosperous empire may possibly be able to 'afford', in its metropolis, a little more space for liberty and dissent among its own citizens. I do not discount the significance of these internal freedoms, or dismiss them as 'phoney': they were ardently fought for, stubbornly maintained, and remain exemplary for us today. It was even possible for British citizens to mount protests against their own nation's endless little imperial wars; and while these protests were with little effect, they did something (as in India) to inhibit repression and exploitation, and to regularise a rule of imperial law.

My point is only that imperialism, or militarism, can perfectly well cohabit with democracy: indeed, very happily. I am wholly committed to Western liberties and rights. But this tells us *nothing whatsoever* about military, or even imperial, dispositions. The question of warlike or peaceful propensities is *another question altogether*, requiring attention to different evidence and a different mode of analysis.

WE, IN THE Western peace movement, are trying to get through to you today, and to warn you about the consequences of this elementary error. The West, and United States militarism in particular, is not, in our considered view, adopting defensive dispositions. This is not so in El Salvador, nor in relation to the Persian Gulf, nor in the menacing decision to introduce cruise missiles and Pershing IIs — forward-based strategic missiles, owned and operated by US personnel — onto European territory.

I do not mean that 'ruling circles' in the United States have a calculated plan to attack the Soviet Union, or to provoke a 'theatre war' in Europe, in league with 'West German revanchism' — or whatever story is leading in *Rude Pravo* now. What is happening is less dramatic, but more serious. There is an immense ideological pressure (supported by the powerful arms lobby) to re-assert American hegemony, after the humiliations in Vietnam and Iran; to achieve American superiority in all fields of weaponry; to impose a military definition of reality, extending into diplomatic and cultural relations; and to reduce lesser nations, including NATO allies, to a status of cliency.

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United States postures are provocative and menacing, and Soviet rulers are right to find them so. This is not to say that Soviet militarism is 'only defensive'. Soviet militarism exists in its own right, with its own 'hawkish imperatives'. These do not (I think) include any insane plan to drive, with massive conventional forces, upon the West. I think you may agree that those thousands of tanks (which are the phobia of Western defence 'experts') are held in readiness for service in places rather closer to you than to the Channel ports.

It is to say that both superpowers are locked into a reciprocal contest, in a game which they play according to the same rules (the matching of weaponry, the search for strategic advantage) — a game whose outcome must be massacre. It is no longer a question of taking sides, of saying which party is most to blame: it is the game itself which must be brought to an end.

In saying this, I hope that I am reporting not only my own view but the dominant view of the Western peace movement. Of course, we have differences of emphasis. But may I quote here a passage of my own, written not for you, but for discussion among my own people?

> If you press me for my own view, then I would hazard that the Russian state is now the more dangerous and provocative in its relation to its own people and to the people of its client states. The rulers of Russia are police-minded and security-minded people, imprisoned within their own ideology, accustomed to meet argument with repression and tanks. But the basic postures of the Soviet Union seem to me, still, to be those of siege and aggressive defence; and even the brutal and botching *intervention in Afghanistan appears to have* followed upon sensitivity as to United States and Chinese strategies.
>
> The United States seems to me to be the more dangerous and provocative and its general military and diplomatic strategies, which press around the Soviet Union with menacing bases. It is in Washington, rather than in Moscow, that scenarios are dreamed up for 'theatre' wars; and it is in America that the alchemists of superkill, the clever technologists of 'advantage' and ultimate weapons, press forward the politics of tomorrow.
>
> But we need not ground our actions on a 'preference' for one or the other bloc. This is unrealistic and could be divisive. What is relevant is the logic of process common to both, reinforcing the ugliest features of each other's societies, and locking both together in each other's nuclear arms in the same degenerative drift.

In the past year I have spoken to many thousands of people at meetings in Britain and the United States, and have conducted a correspondence reaching to many parts of Europe, and I have found, not total agreement, but a very general assent to this description. And then (the discussion continues) how are the people of Europe, East as well as West, over whose heads this threatening game of the superpowers goes on, to develop some common action — a common strategy to thrust those giants apart?

YOU REJECT THIS common strategy. You prefer to fall back upon a received stereotype of what a peace movement must be, and you condemn the movement for European Nuclear Disarmament unheard. You accuse us of 'appeasement'.

This is a painful accusation, for many reasons.

It brings painful recollections to me, of the end of childhood, when, as a boy of 14, I first become politically aware. It was the time of 'Munich'. My family were anti-fascists, and campaigned against the Munich betrayal, my father interrupting from the floor, with an impassioned speech, a meeting in Oxford summoned to congratulate Neville Chamberlain. There

The line from Munich to the present day is . . . unbroken

was a notable by-election fought in Oxford in that year, between the Master of Balliol, Mr A.D. Lindsay (a 'popular front' candidate), and a young supporter of Chamberlain (and of 'Munich') who became notorious for his displays of bad manners, called Mr Quintin Hogg.

Mr Hogg was elected, and eventually spread glorious wings as Lord Hailsham. As Lord Chancellor, he is now an eminent member of Mrs Thatcher's government.

The line from Munich to the present day is, then, unbroken, but it is not exactly the line you suppose. Nor am I certain that it is agreed, as a matter of historical record, that Neville Chamberlain is sufficiently explained as a naive seeker after peace who was deceived. Other historians have suggested that Chamberlain hoped rather to divert the aggressive Nazi drive from the West, and point it in the direction of the East. Prague was to be a half-way-house to Moscow. This explanation would at least remove from Mr Hogg any accusation of inconsistency.

Your accusation also is painful because my own generation, which was not responsible for Munich, did a little to remedy the matter in the next few years. Many of my contemporaries died in the course of putting right that error. I hope that you will have the candour to allow that the European Left was not absent from that costly restitution.

I recollect these two matters because I wish to remind you that there has been *a tradition* of solidarity between our peoples in the face of tyranny, and a tradition in which the Left has had a presence. You should not turn your back upon this.

Your accusation is painful, also, because *this* accusation, and from a *Czech*, is what will delight our opponents most. The fact that it is made, by a dissident, in *Prague*, must prove the matter, once and for all, without further need of argument. You have thrown that card upon the table — but do you know what man (or missile) means to make the trick?

It is painful, finally, because of the form in which it is made. Our movement for disarmament (you say) is

> a very influential force which works unconsciously in the interests of a totalitarian system whose aim is world domination based on the liquidation of human rights.

Nothing could be plainer, nor prettier, than that. Whatever we say, or think, or argue, that is what we really are.

Finis. But . . . wait a minute! Cannot you recall, nearer to home, critics of your own reality who became, in official statements, 'certain elements who', whatever their intentions, were 'unconsciously' aiding Western imperialism . . . and then were 'objectively counter-revolutionary' . . . and, finally, were 'unmasked' as counter-revolutionary agents?

I do not like this form of argument. It is part of the sick lie of our world, in which whoever is not unambiguously of one 'camp' is 'unconsciously' or 'objectively' of the other, and in which everything, from lyrics to treatises to gestures, is traded into the coinage of the Cold War. It is time that we argued in better faith: received and responded to each other's experience: and took each other's coinage of argument as true.

THE MOVEMENT for European Nuclear Disarmament offers to appease no-one and to forgive nothing. It offers to contest the militarisation of both blocs. In refusing Europe as a theatre of war, it proposes — and I will agree that this may appear as an utopian proposition — to resist in the only way possible: to make in Europe a theatre of peace.

Since you may be unfamiliar with our Appeal, and our strategy, I will briefly rehearse these. We issued at the end of April 1980 an Appeal, over numerous and influential signatories in Western Europe and very few (although distinguished) signatories in the East. This warned of the near-approach of nuclear war, of the growth in the powers of military and of security services, and of the limitations imposed upon free exchanges of ideas and upon civil rights, in the West as well as in the East.

We affirmed the autonomy of the peace movement, as between the opposed blocs:

> We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of East and West. Guilt lies squarely upon both parties. Both parties have adopted menacing postures and committed aggressive actions in different parts of the world.

We proposed, then, as a common objective the expulsion of nuclear weapons and bases from the whole of Europe; the withdrawal of United States and Soviet nuclear weapons from European territory; the immediate halting of the deployment of the Soviet SS-20s and of the plans for cruise and Pershing missiles.

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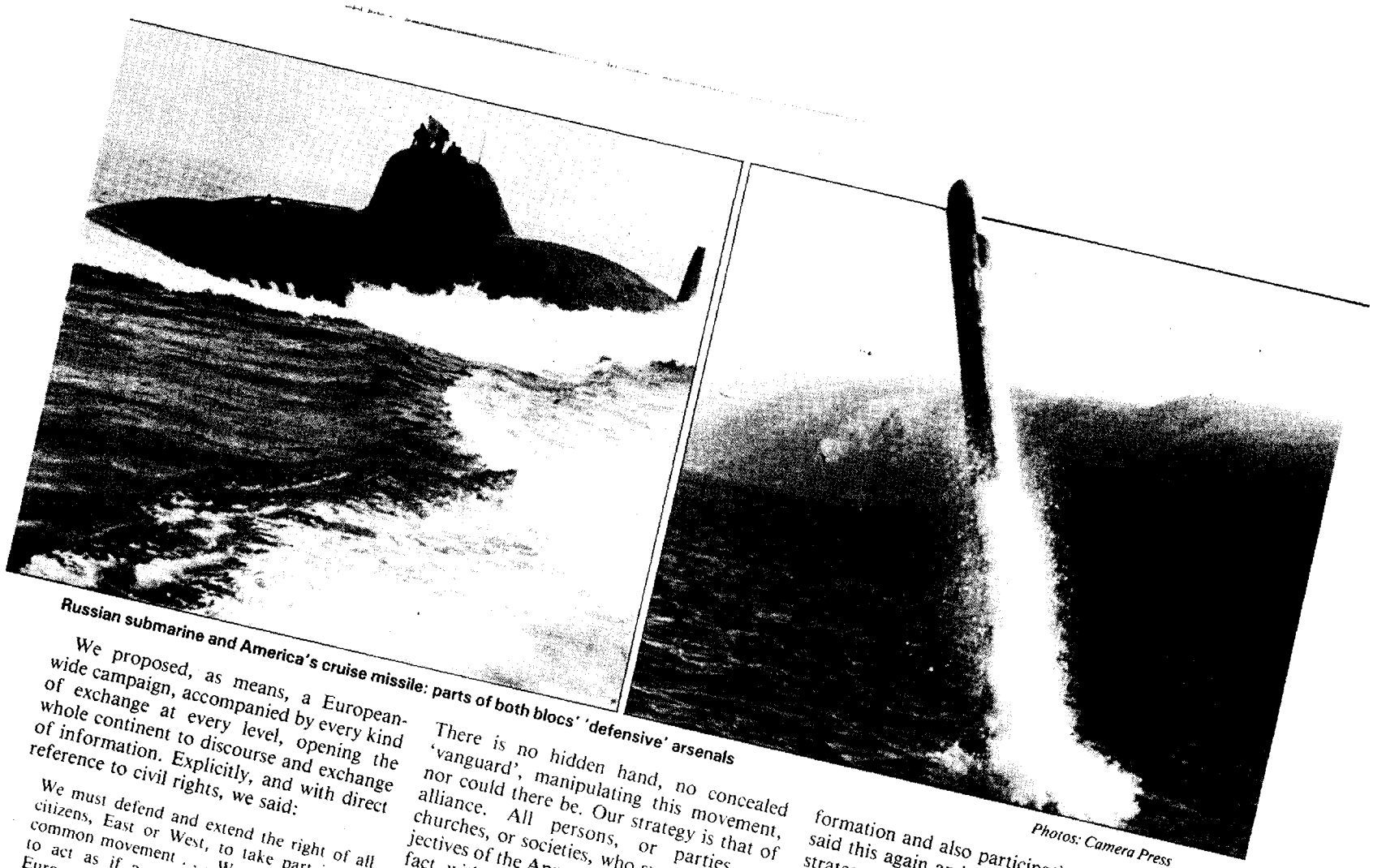

Russian submarine and America's cruise missile: parts of both blocs' 'defensive' arsenals

Photos: Camera Press

We proposed, as means, a European-wide campaign, accompanied by every kind of exchange at every level, opening the whole continent to discourse and exchange of information. Explicitly, and with direct reference to civil rights, we said:

> We must defend and extend the right of all citizens, East or West, to take part in this common movement . . . We must commence to act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other, and we must disregard the prohibitions and limitations imposed by any national state.

Finally, we resumed once again the critical question of the peace movement's autonomy:

> We must resist any attempt by the statesmen of East or West to manipulate this movement to their own advantage. We offer no advantage to either NATO or the Warsaw alliance. Our objectives must be to free Europe from confrontation, to enforce detente between the United States and the Soviet Union, and, ultimately, to dissolve both great power alliances.

This is what we said, and this is what we meant: both consciously and 'unconsciously' also. I do not suggest that the policy is perfect. I do not wish to avoid all argument. There are many problems: should our objective be a nuclear-weapons-free zone, from Poland to Portugal, or from the Atlantic to the Urals? Should we link conventional to nuclear armaments, and call for the withdrawal of both United States and Soviet conventional forces, under phased Rapacki-type agreements? I argue only that the Appeal is a place where common action, and argument in good faith, can start. It is less a programme, once and for all, than a marketplace around which a discourse of other arguments and proposals can take place. And, let us hope, a discourse of persons also: we envisage a European Convention, and perhaps also some great rally, or 'Theatre of Peace', at which citizens of East and West can enter into direct exchange. As for our strategy, all that is open also.

There is no hidden hand, no concealed 'vanguard', manipulating this movement, nor could there be. Our strategy is that of alliance. All persons, or parties, or churches, or societies, who support the objectives of the Appeal are associated, by the fact, with the common movement. We have no great bureaucracy, no extensive resources: whatever is done must be done by people themselves. Nor are we in a position to refuse any support, from whatever quarter. We cannot inspect persons' credentials nor impose a party line.

BUT WE CAN and do hold to certain guiding principles. One (which I have stressed already) is the autonomy of the peace movement. Its allegiance is to neither bloc but to the remaking of a Europe of peace.

A second is the principle of reciprocity. Whatever unilateral action any nation may take, in renouncing or refusing nuclear weapons and bases, this is to be seen as part of a continent-wide campaign, with demonstrations and other forms of symbolic expression, pressing reciprocal action upon the other powers. We are interested in discourse with various constituencies in 'the East', and we do not refuse dialogue with quasi-official bodies.

But a condition for common action is that, whatever opposition they display towards Western nuclear 'modernisation' (an opposition which we share) they *also* signify and give expression to their opposition to Soviet 'modernisation': in particular, at this moment, to the deployment of the SS-20.

We appreciate that this is difficult. We have no expectations of CND-type marches and demonstrations in your country. But we consider that, with patience and consultation, appropriate forms of expression may be found.

Third, we are committed, as an integral and necessary component of the idea of END, to breaking open a discourse throughout the whole continent — to the open exchange of persons and ideas, of information and also participation. We have said this again and again: this is no covert strategy. As I wrote, in the 'Notes' which you so much dislike,

> The rising movement in Western Europe against NATO 'modernization' must exact a real price from the Soviet military managers, in the opening of Eastern Europe to genuine exchanges and to participation in the common internationalist discourse. This must not be a hidden tactic but an open and principled strategy.

This entails a definite, but limited, commitment to the cause of civil rights. It is definite, because it is necessary also to the movement's autonomy, and necessary also to the re-making of Europe. It is limited, in the sense that an autonomous peace movement cannot intervene in the particular cases and occasions of each nation's life (except where these concern the identity and relations of the peace movement itself), nor identify itself with sectional movements and programmes. As individuals, supporters of END can and do do more; as an autonomous movement of European repair, we cannot. You may find this ambiguous. But I have tried to be plain.

WHAT, THEN, is your own strategy for the repair of Europe? I find, on this question, silence in your letter.

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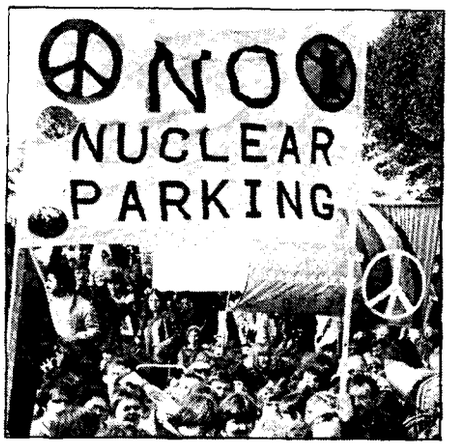

There is, at one point, a suggestion that the presence of our 'other world', the 'free West', acts in some way to 'restrain' your own totalitarian system. I can see that this may be so. The expression of Western public opinion may, in this or that case, have some marginal effect.

But can you seriously suppose that Western *war preparations* are conducive to the liberalisation of societies in the East? Can you explain to me how nuclear missiles and nerve gas contribute to human rights? Will any human rights survive a European 'theatre' war?

You argue against my view of an interactive process, by which the militarisation of each bloc enhances the miltarisation of the other. Following Arendt, you find a sufficient explanation for Soviet militarisation in the original ill-will of Communist ideology: 'the suppression of human rights . . . manifests itself *also* in militarism'. Communist ideology is the self-sufficient author of its own military and security definitions of reality. And (perhaps?) only the noble nuclear weapons of the free West restrain it from world domination?

I THINK YOU are desperately mistaken. I wish we could spend three days together, and put your evidence and mine beside each other on the table.

There is, first, the point that, if this is the 'true' Communist idea, then it is not doing very well. There has not been, for very many years, any taste for that scenario in the West, whether 'Right' or 'Left'. Not even among Western Communist Parties — the powerful Eurocommunist tendency takes, as its starting-point, the absolute rejection of any such future.

A Communist 'idea' of world domination, which has lost Yugoslavia, which is losing Poland, which holds on with difficulty (and against the people) in Czechoslovakia and Hungary (and perhaps East Germany?), will face impossible problems of digestion if it seeks to swallow the Italians, the British, the French.

This is not a realistic proposal. It is an ideological fairy-tale, more to be expected as rhetorical decoration to the speeches of Western politicans than from the hand of an independent-minded writer in Prague.

On the contrary, I ask you to consider my own proposal once again. It is the military confrontation of the two blocs which continually refreshes the springs of totalitarianism, which legitimates the activities of the security services, which imposes military-ideological definitions of reality, which defines all dissent as 'treason' and as 'objectively' counter-revolutionary, which consolidates repressive state bureaucracies, which limits the space for human rights and which brings within its closure any hopeful social transition. As the missiles of the West press around the borders of the Soviet Union, they serve to hold together an authoritarian regime which has long lost all credibility; the utterly bankrupt ideology and methods of the Stalinist rear-guard are propped in place by each new military threat. And not only propped in place: it is a reciprocal, degenerative process. The succession to the old men in the Kremlin is being determined by the actions of the Pentagon today; and the Soviet Politbureau will be looking anxiously around for a strong man to answer General Haig.

How can this possibly help the advance of human rights? How has it helped in the past? Did it help the Hungarians in 1956? The Czechs in 1968? Are the threatening pronouncements of NATO Councils helping Polish Solidarity today? On the contrary: these enable *Rude Pravo* and *Isvestia* to denounce trade unionists and KOR advisers as 'counter-revolutionary elements', and to advance the arguments of military expediency to counter human rights.

Surely you must know by now, 'over there', that Western military pressure is empty, futile, and counter-productive? It is a bluff which has been thrice called: but, in calling it, the arguments of Communist orthodoxy and discipline have always emerged stronger.

The very word 'peace' has become an object of suspicion

Throughout the past tense months, the space for Polish autonomy has been limited precisely by the *realpolitik* of the military confrontation. If the Polish people succeed in consolidating their new rights, it will owe everything to their own courage and discipline, nothing to the Western military presence. What little help the West has been able to give to the Poles has been of a different, and more peaceful, kind: a little printing equipment, some delegations, a little trade union advice.

AND WOULD our own strategy, the strategy of END, have weakened the positions of Polish Solidarity? On the contrary. If, two years ago, acting together, we had succeeded in imposing some agreement upon both blocs — on the lines of the old Rapacki Plan — for the progressive demilitarisation of Poland and both Germanys, and for the pull-back of both American and Soviet forces, then surely the room for Polish autonomy would have been enlarged, and the dramas of the past months would have been less tense — and less hazardous, as they still remain?

I fear that the statesmen of the NATO powers care rather less for human rights than you suppose. The more moderate and realistic Western advisers want, above all else, 'stability'. They want to congeal the *status quo*: they want the political map of Europe to remain the same for ever. They view the rash 'extremism' of Solidarity with anxiety: it offers to introduce 'instability' into the agreed hegemonic settlement of the affairs of Europe between both superpowers.

The more hawkish and aggressive Western advisers are another matter again: they would like the combatants for human rights in Eastern Europe to make all the trouble for their rulers that they can. They *want* you to suffer, and to suffer *more*. This confirms their ideology and allows the military budgets to swell.

But they will not help you. They do not wish you to *win* your contests for human rights, because this would weaken their own ideological presuppositions. They wish you to trade your suffering and despair, for ever, into the coinage of the Cold War. The only help which they will bring you will be terminal: a European theatre war.

AND WHY are we arguing? For there is one place in your letter where we stand close together: indeed, in an identical position. You write,

> Any disarmament movement is meaningful and hopeful only in the sense of the realisation of its objectives as a human rights movement.

This is exactly where END started, and where we still stand. We wish to set in motion an alternative logic of process. We wish to bring into a common understanding, a common perspective of European solidarity, the Western movement for peace and the Eastern movement for human rights.

Why then does your letter reveal so many and so deep suspicions of us and of our motives?

You offer only one reason, and it is one which I respect. You view with suspicion a limited and mercenary notion of 'détente', which is confined to economic agreements at the level of state self-interests, and which (you argue) can simply be turned to the advantage of the rulers of the Warsaw bloc. I accept this warning. But it is not the same as the policy of END. We propose direct exchanges, the opening of discourse and common action between the citizenry of East and West, which may, at the same time, strengthen the causes both of peace and of civil rights, and offer some protection to combatants for human rights in the East.

I think it probable that the real grounds of your suspicions are different. And I will suggest three.

First, the incessant official 'peace-loving' propaganda of your own rulers induces in you such nausea that the very word 'peace' has become, for you, an object of suspicion. It is a rhetoric in whose name every measure of repression goes forward.

I understand your reaction. There is a glossy, mendacious publication of 'friendship' in this country called *Czechoslovak Life*. I have before me, in an issue of June 1980, a pompous address by Vasil Bilak, Secretary to the Central Committee of the CPC, entitled 'Socialism and Peace are Inseparable'. The role of Bilak, during the Prague crisis of 1968, has been sufficiently exposed by Mlynar. I will only add that it therefore did not surprise me that Mr Bilak,

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in the accompanying photograph, has exactly the same furtive and shifty expression as President Nixon wore during Watergate.

I understand, perfectly, why such 'peace-loving' professions make you sick. I have been told that certain members of the official Czech Peace Committee had the integrity to protest at the events of 1968. They were all summarily dismissed and a new 'Peace Committee' was appointed in their place. If this is true, then END has no desire to speak with that 'Peace Committee'.

This, then, is understood. But you should not allow the good name of peace to be expropriated so easily. Mr Bilak (I notice) claims also as the property of his side the causes of 'liberty and human rights'. Have you therefore turned your back upon these?

Second, I suspect that your response to END is influenced by slight and partial information. You suppose that the movement has been launched, in the West, by naive persons of 'goodwill' and fellow-travellers. You have perhaps been told that the initiators are such people.

I will only say, then, that the initiators and the majority of the signatories to the END Appeal are persons who have, over many years, clearly identified their support for the cause of human rights in Eastern Europe. My own unequivocal commitment to this cause goes back, it is true, for only 25 years; but other initiators have a longer record than that. And the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which has been the centre for distribution of the Appeal and correspondence throughout Europe, has repeatedly supported, through publications, public meetings, and petitions, the cause of Soviet and Eastern European 'dissidents', and of Charter 77 in particular.

YOU MAY ENQUIRE into these credentials more closely if you wish. But a third reason for your suspicions may perhaps be more complex, and less pleasant, than this. You may even have been in receipt — in all innocence — of 'disinformation'.

I was surprised, when conversing with friends in Prague, to learn that among visitors who passed between the West and your city were certain persons who, I have reason to believe, are in the service of Western Intelligence.

I ought not to have been surprised. This is, of course, very much part of the Cold War game. Nor do I think it be a very sensational or scandalous matter. These persons are not in the business of 'conspiracy' or 'sabotage'. They are simply tedious people amassing files and trivial information.

From what we read these days in our own press, it would seem that the work of 'intelligence' is a good deal more futile and unintelligent than is supposed. The major occupation of the rival intelligence services appears to be mutual interpenetration; and while there may be much to be said for this occupation when it takes place between lovers, one supposes that it provides less gratification when the partners are the KGB, MI6 and CIA.

There is nothing very desperate, nor even efficient, about these people, and we must not allow ourselves to be reduced by them to conspiracy or paranoia. And yet there is one objective to which both Western and Eastern security services are committed in common. *They do not wish the democratic movements of the East and West to recognise each other and to make common cause.* That would destroy their whole game: it would put them out of business altogether. They wish each of us to suspect each other, and to go on trading ourselves into the currency of the Cold War.

I suspect that a little 'disinformation' is going on, in Eastern Europe today, as to the policy of END and the motives of its initiators. It might come, equally well, from the 'intelligence' of West or East: very probably the former. I ask you to pause before you accept such information, and to enquire, rather closely, into its veracity.

I am, as I get older, more and more of an anti-statist: I do not trust state power. I had formed, some years ago, a conclusion not unlike that which concludes your own letter. What matters most are not the stereotypes of 'Left' and 'Right' but the active democratic values and respect for persons and for human rights. If I have a quarrel with you, it is this. You are a libertarian and anti-statist, but only on your side of the world. I ask you to extend your anti-statism a little further: and to show less confidence in the states of the West.

EITHER WE WILL BURN together, East and West, or we must reverse the inexorable thrust towards war. And we can do that only by making Europe whole once more, by healing the open wound which runs across the heart of our continent. Nothing less than a new internationalism, a commitment to each other, will be enough.

The opposed military blocs can never be such healers. For they operate, by definition, upon the principles of human fission.

We are in search of the alternative forces of fusion. It is (we agree) a difficult, an improbable, strategy. It would commence, at first, with a few exchanges, with a dialogue; it might find expression, among the youth of both halves of Europe, in some common symbols and symbolic actions; it would rest, not upon uniform programmes, but upon a mutual understanding of each other's objectives.

But if those two forces could be brought together in solidarity and fusion — autonomous, democratic, and anti-militarist — then an immense and affirmative presence would be felt across the whole continent. It is the only presence which could possibly be powerful enough to prevent the logic of militarism from reaching its ultimate consummation. But if that presence should assert itself, then, in the same moment, the very parameters of Cold War politics (which have endured now for over thirty years) would be transformed. Small nations would reassume autonomy, new spaces for social experiment would open up, a new discourse of persons and of ideas would commence.

You may think this to be impossible. But we are glad that you opened this exchange, and we will welcome your response. We wish you success in your contest for human rights, including (not least) your right to disagree with us.

Yours sincerely,
E. P. Thompson

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TRADE UNION LAW

Strike and be sued

Geoff Fordham, Humphrey Forrest and Anthony Blair report that strikes are no longer immune from legal action.

A RECENT judgment by Lord Denning represents a fundamental attack on the right to strike. Briefly, the legal implications of the Hadmor Productions v Hamilton case are as follows. Any trade unionist who organises industrial action could have an injunction or claim for damages brought against them, provided

- the action involves a breach of employment contracts (as strikes, go-slows, working to rule all do);
- the action interferes with, or leads to a breach of, the employer's commercial contracts with customers and suppliers.

Since the aim of most industrial action is to do just this, all but the most token strikes may now be construed as illegal, and an injunction or damages could be obtained by a customer or supplier against the strike leaders.

TO UNDERSTAND how this comes about requires, as Denning himself said, 'a complicated expedition into legal history'. There's never been a formal right to strike in this country. Instead, through the nineteenth century a pattern of immunities developed, culminating in the Trade Disputes Act of 1906. In the course of strikes, torts — civil wrongs — may be committed; but provided they occur 'in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute', they are held to be 'not actionable'. It is important to emphasise that, strictly speaking, they remained 'unlawful' under common law, although they had been given immunity from legal action.

This immunity was called into doubt during the 1960s. In the wake of the notorious *Rookes v Barnard* case, Lord Denning developed the tort of 'interference with trade', in which liability arose if unlawful means were used; and it was confirmed that an indirect breach of a commercial contract as a result of a strike could give rise to liability. In 1974, the Labour government's Trade Union and Labour Relations Act restored the legality of industrial action: section 13(3) declared that 'for the avoidance of doubt' inducements of breaches of contract were not themselves actionable, nor did they amount to 'unlawful means' for the purpose of establishing any tort.

The position remained clear until the Conservative government passed its Employment Act in 1980. Tucked away in this was a section repealing the crucial section 13(3) of the 1974 Act.

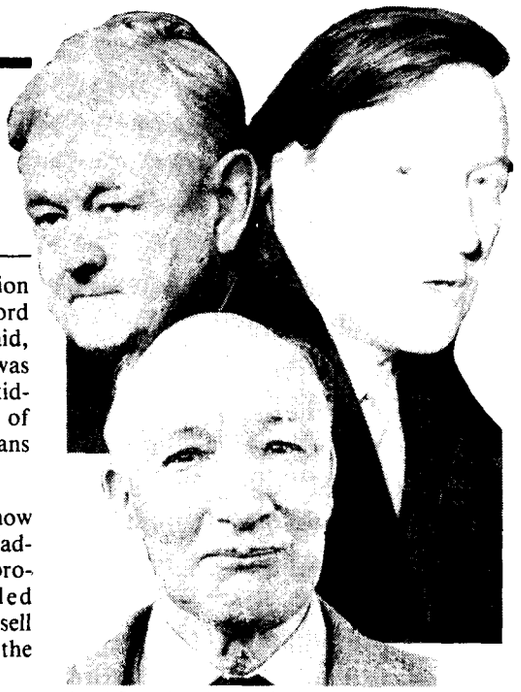
Lord Wedderburn, the trade union law expert, made frantic attempts in the House of Lords to draw attention to the hidden dangers of the repeal of section 13(3). Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor, replied to him in the debate. It is not an exaggeration to say that Lord Hailsham ridiculed Lord Wedderburn's fears. The repeal, he said, was a tidying-up act; section 13(3) was redundant, meaningless, 'a floating kidney'; and in any event, the whole tort of interference with trade by unlawful means was an invention of Lord Wedderburn.

LORD WEDDERBURN'S fears have now been confirmed by the Hadmor case. Hadmor Productions made a series of programmes, appropriately entitled 'Unforgettable', which they arranged to sell to Thames TV, who began screening the series late last year.

The unions in the industry have been concerned for some time about the television companies' practice of buying in ready made programmes from 'facility' companies. Thames operates its own studios below capacity, and when, as in this case, Thames bought the programmes from Hadmor for less than it would have cost to make them in-house, ACTT stewards perceived a threat to their members' jobs.

In February this year the joint Thames/ACTT shops decided to black the series, and ACTT members were informed of the decision in a circular from Bob Hamilton, the union's full-time official. Hadmor applied for an injunction against Hamilton and an ACTT steward to get the blacking lifted. The initial application was turned down, and Hadmor went to the Court of Appeal.

There, Lord Denning expressly recognised the tort of interference with trade by unlawful means. He held that the repeal of section 13(3) had the effect of reviving the argument about whether inducing breaches of contracts of employment amounted to 'unlawful means'; and he maintained that Parliament could not have meant to field a doubt back to the courts and therefore must have intended to resolve the argument against the trade union. Otherwise, why repeal section 13(3) at all? The injunction was granted.



Lord Denning (centre) cites Lord Wedderburn (right), but ignores the Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham (left).

There was nothing special or 'secondary' about the industrial action that led the court to grant the injunction. The blacking was to put pressure on Thames to change its poli-

Contd on p16

SECURITY

Did the secret computer exist?

DUNCAN CAMPBELL investigates the army in Ulster

REPORTS OF a massive computer in Ulster with files on most of the population may be a government inspired myth, according to official intelligence documents obtained and published in an Irish newspaper. The Dublin *Sunday Tribune* has just published a series of articles based on the documents, of which we have copies.

As early as 1974, reports started appearing in the *Times* and other major British newspapers about computer files in Ulster, so detailed that information on the colour and style of domestic furniture was instantly available. In 1978, when the Labour government procured a new computer for the job, a secrecy screen was maintained, even about the model of computer bought. The House of Commons was told by Harold Wilson that it would computerise existing records. However a MoD spokesman explained that this meant 'suspects, weapons, incidents and vehicles'.

It now appears that no such computer existed, then or now, and that the previous operation had been highly unsuccessful. Extensive details of army intelligence procedures are given in the document, the 'Northern Ireland — Intelligence Environment', from the Army's Ashford Intelligence Centre.

The computer system is, and always has been, restricted to vehicles, and is called Operation Vengeful. There are 50 Vengeful terminals in Northern Ireland including border and other permanent checkpoints. Some checkpoints are concealed, and the numbers of vehicles passing are watched on television. But there are no computer records on anything other than vehicles.

The first part of Vengeful was in operation by 1974, when every vehicle registered in the North was put onto computer, as happens in Britain with the Police National Computer. But this was, according to a former Army commander in Ulster, a 'disaster'. No useful leads were obtained in the 18 months he experienced on Vengeful, and a great deal of time was wasted taking and passing information about completely innocent vehicles.

The new computer system in Ulster is in fact very small, *incorporating only information on suspect* vehicles. It is likely to be more successful than its predecessor. But information about people, houses, and so on remains on manual card indexes, which have now been in operation for 11 years. A special version of the card system for Irish country areas is codenamed 'Farmer's Daughter'.

The documents also identify the way in which the military and RUC Special Branch have become completely integrated. A Special Military Intelligence Unit has plain clothes military officers and NCOs in every Special Branch office. All intelligence gathering in the north is co-ordinated and directed by a director of Intelligence from either MI5 or MI6. This official now answers to the new Ulster Security Co-ordinator, Sir Francis Brooks Richards. □

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Diary

KAI BIRD

■Maggie Thatcher was out in Arabia last week, no doubt trying to persuade the Saudis to part with some of their petro-dollars in return for a bit of British weaponry. So here's an item for those who love to follow the scent of Arab petro-dollars.

Ever since Jimmy Carter froze Iranian assets in late 1979, sending shock waves of insecurity through the banking community, Arab money managers have been searching for a 'freeze-proof' bank.

The Saudis, who probably have close to 22.0 billion US dollars in US Treasury bonds, can't very well withdraw these funds without precipitating a financial crash. But lesser oil potentates may have found an ingenious method to launder their American investments. The name of their 'freeze-proof' bank? Moscow Narodny Bank.

The Soviet bank recently eagerly accepted some 1.2 billion US dollars from the monetary agencies of Kuwait, Libya and possibly one other OPEC state. The Arabs might earn a bit less interest on their money, which Narodny Bank could re-cycle into short term US Treasury bills. But with these bills in the name of a Soviet bank, their funds would escape a Reagan freeze of Arab assets in the event of a full scale Middle East crisis.

Now, what was it that Comrade Lenin said about using the capitalists to build the socialist millenium?

■By way of explanation, I am the associate editor of *The Nation,* America's oldest weekly magazine, founded in 1865 by a group of unrepentant radical abolitionists. Our pages span the liberal-left spectrum and our editorial opinion shares a remarkable affinity with the *NS*. This, sadly, places us on the fringe of reputable political discourse in Ronald Reagan's America.

Some fear a New McCarthyism and indeed a few regular contributors to *The Nation* wonder if they might soon receive a congressional subpoena from Alabama Senator Jeremiah Denton, the former Vietnam POW who chairs the ominous-sounding Sub-committee on Security and Terrorism. But most of us sense that McCarthyism will not appear in the same form twice.

So far it has all turned out to be a sad and slightly ludicrous re-run of a bad movie. Earlier this month, for instance, a full page ad appeared in the *New York Times* endorsing US policy in El Salvador. Sponsored by a new organisation called *The Committee for a Free World,* the 400 signatories of the statement bring to mind a similar organisation that herded intellectual notables onto the Cold War bandwagon in the '50s.

In fact, many of the signatories, including Sydney Hook, Irving Kristol, Melvin Lasky and Raymond Aron were guiding lights of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which was exposed in 1966 as a CIA front.

And indeed, it now turns out that the Free World committee received nearly half of its initial 125,000 US dollars seed money from two foundations (the Smith Richardson Foundation of North Carolina and the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts of Pittsburgh) who have close ties to the CIA. They never give up, do they?

■Quite a bit of trans-Atlantic 'subversion', in fact, is taking place. European voices *are* being heard. E. P. Thompson, while not quite the celebrity that he seems to be here, recently rewrote his CND pamphlet, *Protest and Survive,* for an American audience, taking on our own clique of 'expert' defence analysts, such as Richard Burt of the *New York Times*. (Burt has recently gone from promoting the MX and Trident missiles in the pages of the *Times* to a key job in Reagan's State Department.)

Thompson came up with a brilliant metaphor for the world in which these people operate. Their 'expertise', says Thompson, 'is contained within an infantile political view of the world, derived, I suppose, from too much early reading of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. The evil kingdom of Mordor lies there, and there it ever will lie, while on our side lies the nice republic of Eriador, inhabited by confused liberal hobbits who are rescued from time to time by the genial white wizardry of Gandalf-figures such as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski or, maybe, Richard Allen.'

The Nation published the entire essay in a special issue, reaching its 48,000 subscribers. The reader response has been unprecedented — some 8,000 bulk orders of the essay have been sold through the mails.

■One of the more interesting attempts to protect official secrets is being made by a publishing house in a US court case, *Harper & Row et al v. The Nation*. My editor, Victor Navasky, is accused by this publishing house of stealing presidential secrets in the form of Gerald Ford's memoirs, graciously titled *A Time to Heal*. A better title might have been *A Time to Pardon*.

An early copy of Jerry's book did indeed appear in *The Nation*'s offices — and an article soon ran in the magazine revealing that Jerry had spoken with Al Haig about pardoning then-president Richard Nixon in exchange for his resignation. The publication of this news scooped *Time Inc.* and *Reader's Digest,* who decided to cancel their agreement to serialise the book. Jerry and his publisher lost some money, for which they are suing *The Nation*.

The case basically comes down to this: can presidential papers (which Jerry used to write his book), or for that matter, information contained in any government documents generated at the taxpayer's expense, be copyrighted?

If so, then the publishing moguls who have made millions out of official secrets peddled by nasty characters like Henry Kissinger can re-commence their haggling, certain that the copyright laws are protecting their 'investments' from nosy reporters.

The funny thing is that when Richard Nixon's book *The Real War,* was leaked no one gave a damn. No lawyers came running round with their writs, we didn't even hear from Dick. Maybe everyone knew our pardoned president had nothing to say.

■I wish I could say that our immigration rules and our treatment of immigrants were emulated in every Commonwealth country . . . There is no rise in neo-fascist organisations in Britain.

Race relations in Britain are 'absolutely' satisfactory — or so said Nicholas Ridley, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, in Jamaica two weeks before Brixton erupted. Perhaps Ridley's sanguine assessment of British racism can be excused; after all, the boys in the Foreign Office are not responsible for keeping up with domestic squabbles.

But listen to him dissemble in this interview with Ken Campbell of the Jamaican *Caribbean Times* on the proposed Nationality Bill.

Ridley: 'The bill now before parliament is a nationality bill which defines the three categories of Britain's citizens and makes no difference whatsoever to immigration in any respect at all . . .'

Ken Campbell: 'Would the rights . . . of British citizens be affected according to which of the three categories they fall in?'

Ridley: 'No'.

Campbell: 'Then why the definition?'

Ridley: 'Because we haven't got such an Act. It's none of your business anyway.'

Come now, Minister, where's the truth in this? Even Al Haig could do better.

Roger Woddis

Chef's special

Mr James Prior, the Employment Secretary, aims to cut the unemployment figures by abolishing the compulsory registration of everyone out of work.

Oh, what is that smell
That floats from the kitchen
And seems like the scent
Of high pheasant on hooks?
Is it some sort of game
With a rarified name?
Is it fish? Is it meat?
No, it's simply a treat
Which the Chef has created
By cooking the books.

It could be a quarter
Or more of a million
Will vanish in bubbles
And billowing smoke.
What a brilliant device
To make paper taste nice,
So that figures we hate
To be served on a plate
Can be carved at the table
And cut at a stroke!

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcard, please.)

More people have started biting their nails because of the recession, according to a survey among manicurists and beauticians. — *Basildon Evening Echo* (David Ealey)

The Palace also announced more details of the ring, the dresses and the cake for the wedding. A spokesman said that friends of the couple might send cakes as gifts but others should send only photographs of cakes. — *Guardian* (G. Underhill)

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Trade union law

Contd from p 14

cies. Thames was the only direct target, and action was only taken by Thames employees. On the face of it, a clear enough example of straightforward, 'primary' industrial action, no different in substance from any other.

That's what makes the decision so disturbing. At one point in Denning's judgment he suggests that there may not have been a trade dispute at all within the legal definition; but for the most part, his argument assumes that this is a straightforward example of industrial action — which means, of course, that the conclusions can be generally applied. All the suing party has to do is to frame its claim in these terms: the union's call to strike is interfering with our business; the unlawful means is the strike call. There isn't even any need to show that there has been an inducement to breach a *particular* contract — general interference with the party's business is enough.

As far as the Hadmor case is concerned, if a trade dispute does exist here, the initial decision by ACTT stewards to call for a blacking (in legal terms inducing ACTT members to break their employment contracts) is itself protected by immunities. But because of the repeal of section 13(3), as we've seen, inducing a breach of contract is once again unlawful. It provides the 'unlawful means' needed to establish liability for the tort of interference with Hadmor's business; and those were the principal grounds on which the injunction was granted.

On this general line of argument, a variety of other torts are now available. A simple pay dispute means the employer's commercial contracts aren't fulfilled: so aggrieved customers sue the stewards for indirectly procuring a breach of their contracts. A negotiator says 'Improve the offer, or I'll recommend industrial action,' and they are threatening interference with trade. A shop stewards committee draws up plans for a strike: and it's civil conspiracy.

The right to strike means nothing unless it includes the right to strike effectively. Under the Court of Appeal's interpretation that right no longer exists. The House of Lords, however, may shrink back from the implications of confirming such a momentous step. In the recent ISTC case they were not prepared to follow Denning's lead, though this time he has the law on his side.

It is not clear that Denning fully appreciates the consequences of his decision: he suggests that it is in 'complete conformity' with the restrictions on secondary action contained in section 17 of the Employment Act. In fact, it is completely opposed: the development of 'unlawful means' to include breaches and inducements to breach contracts exposes not only all secondary action, but primary action as well.

In the course of justifying his interpretation of the repeal of section 13(3), Lord Denning made great play of Lord Wedderburn's speech in the Lords, as reported in Hansard. Normally the courts are not allowed to use Hansard as an aid to interpretation of a statute. Lord Denning broke the tradition — sensibly enough. However, he pointed to Lord Wedderburn's speech as evidence of the fact that Parliament was well aware of the effect of the repeal. Inexplicably, he failed to make any mention of Lord Hailsham's speech, made on behalf of the government, in which he indicated that there was no intention — indeed quite the opposite — that the repeal should have this result. Who can blame the unions for distrusting the courts?

LETTERS

Legal, decent, honest . . .

From Phillip Whitehead MP & Austin Mitchell MP

Michael Meacher hovers in his letter (*NS* 10 April) between accepting that the 'unfortunate' draft of the Labour Coordinating Committee letter to constituencies was intimidatory, and denying it. Casuistry is always interesting as an art form but it can be better employed than in defending the indefensible. Was the letter really just about ensuring 'that a debate took place, attended by the MP'? Remember, the letter described the election as 'totally illegitimate'. It then said that GMCs should 'insist that the MP brings his/her ballot paper to the GMC to be filled in after a vote has been taken there. The implication of *that* is that the ballot paper would be filled in on the lines the GMC by its vote decided. It also dragged in a little reminder that reselection might make people more amenable. If all that isn't intimidation, and overt instruction, we would hate to see the LCC's definition of these processes.

Can we also put Bertha Williams (Letters, 10 April) right about those 8.00 a.m. news bulletins, lest this adds to the miasma of paranoia hanging over the LCC and its self-appointed candidate. Like MPs the BBC correspondent stayed up all night, for the simple reason that the House of Commons was discussing the Telecom Bill. It was the news that Tribune MPs were feverishly trying to stop the Benn candidacy which led to its premature launch at 3.30 a.m., and then to an instant response which Bertha Williams seems to think occurred because MPs are kept in the BBC cellars for instant anti-Bennery. They aren't, but it could be that on this occasion many would have volunteered for such a role as the reserve army of punditry because of their genuine anger that what looks awfully like personal ambition should be put before the interests of the Labour Party as a whole.

House of Commons

Ministers' games

From Norma Percy, Producer, 'High Office', Granada Television

I would like to correct one serious error in Peter Kellner's article (*NS* 10 April) on Granada's series 'High Office'. Mr Kellner implies we only thought of inviting Tony Benn to take part at the last minute when another former Minister dropped out.

In fact, of course, Mr Benn is one of the first politicians any producer would consider for a programme involving the civil service. We didn't invite him because during the six months' research that preceded the recording, we were advised by both civil servants and politicians that his situation was not the most interesting one to examine. We were told civil servants opposed Mr Benn, not necessarily because they disagreed with his policies, but because they believed his policies would not be supported by the Prime Minister and the majority of his colleagues, and thus would be defeated in Cabinet. We were persuaded it would be much more interesting to examine how far a permanent secretary would go to oppose a policy he believed to be wrong, when his Minister was supported by the Prime Minister and a majority of his colleagues. For this reason, other politicians were asked to appear.

36 Golden Square, London W1

BR's axe

From Sir Peter Parker MVO, Chairman, British Railways Board

Mick Hamer (*NS* 3 April) is a touch too quick to suggest conspiracy and confusion where none exists. He writes darkly of a 'secret memorandum' dated 17 December and suggests it 'flatly contradicts the public posture BR took on its review of "*Rail Policy*".'

But the 'Rail Policy' statement is dated March 1981, and in his haste, Mr Hamer has not appreciated that the December document was an input to the later document, and not the reverse.

BR has been sounding public warnings since last autumn that 3,000 miles of track could close by the end of the decade unless more money is made available for maintenance and renewal.

'Rail Policy' made clear that decline through a gradual rundown of the system was one option facing BR. It also made clear that the Board favours the option to maintain the network at its present size with increasing levels of investment.

Mr Hamer is also wrong about our cash limit for 1981/82. This has been increased from last year's £790m to £920m.

Euston Square, PO Box 100, London NW1

Mick Hamer adds: As my article made clear (and I quote): 'BR has decided to make one last attempt to get more money from government. "Rail Policy" says that BR needs an extra £72 million.' The document I quoted from was one of the internal papers in the run-up to 'Rail Policy.' If 'Rail Policy' fails BR will revert to the policy in this document.

The £790m figure was taken from 'Rail Policy' (p.29).

A sick joke

From George Galloway, Secretary/ Organiser, Dundee Labour Party

It is a great pity that so sensitive a diarist as Anna Coote should trivialise an act of solidarity with an oppressed people (Diary, 10 April).

Believe it or not the people living on the West Bank of the Jordan under brutal military occupation attach some importance to our small acknowledgement that they are still there, that they are human beings, and that they are not taking the military stick lying down. That is why the recent Dundee delegation (4 councillors not 6) spoke to audiences totalling nearly 8000 people despite the heavy hand and the watchful eye of the military governor.

It is even more of a pity that Ms Coote should compound her offence with the repetition of a misconception and a rather sick joke. First, the council presented the moslem Mayor of Nablus with a 'bumper bottle of Scotch' because he is exceedingly fond of the stuff. Second, the allegation that a kilt was presented to a man minus both his legs as a result of an Israeli terrorist car bomb is a complete fabrication and does not deserve repeating in a journal like the *New Statesman* under the good name of Ms Coote.

1 Rattray Street, Dundee

Information wanted

Frankie Morris is collecting material for a critical biography of cartoonist and illustrator Sir John Tenniel (1820-1914). Details of any correspondence by or relating to him to her until 11 May at Crosby Hall, Cheyne Walk, London SW3.

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R. W. Johnson on differing forms of racism produced by differing demands of trade and industry

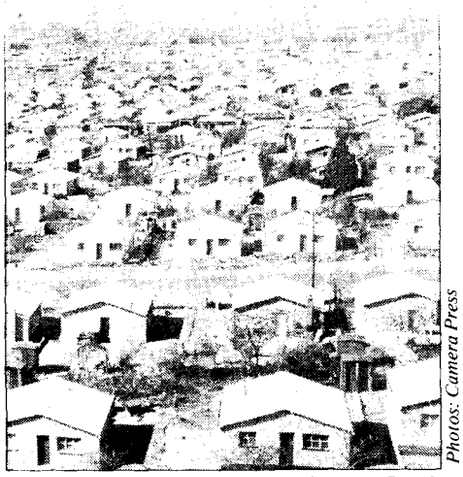
Lynch mob or apartheid

THE WRITING of comparative history is rather like belling the cat. Everyone agrees it is a marvellous thing to do, but it is fiendishly difficult of achievement. Those who advance confidently to hew away chunks of 'social science theory' are, typically, devoured with feline ease by professional historians who know more about at least one of the cultures thus compared, or simply find the whole enterprise facile and superficial. To succeed one needs not only to command several national histories as an expert but also to have a sense of social dynamics which goes far deeper than mere 'historical insight'. In recent time only Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* has truly passed the test. Until now, that is, for George Fredrickson's *White Supremacy* clearly belongs in this same exclusive class. One American critic has referred to it as 'the most important study — by far — of race relations written in our time'. For once one's fears of Transatlantic review-inflation are unjustified: it is a judgment in which one can only concur.

One can see how disastrously Fredrickson's enterprise might have turned out had he stuck to what he tells us was his initial focus — the common experience of a shifting frontier by white settlers who, in both the US South and South Africa, interpreted this experience via the medium of a fundamentalist northern European Protestantism. A lesser scholar would, doubtless, have erected a vast idealist mish-mash about the tortuous inversion of the Protestant ethic by Turner's 'closing frontier'. Those who like that sort of thing (*Encounter,* for example) would have liked it very much; we would have had a lot of wordy flim-flam; and been none the wiser.

Instead, Fredrickson starts with the very different colonial traditions the Dutch brought to the Cape and the British to North America from their preceding experiences in Indonesia and Ireland. The British had learnt their colonialism as an enterprise of outright conquest and expropriation of people deemed as 'savage' through their 'inborn rudeness and barbarous customs'. The Dutch, on the other hand, went to trade rather than settle and their agents were specifically forbidden to enslave, conquer or expropriate. If stable patterns of trade were to be maintained they had, from the start, to learn tolerance of religious, cultural and racial diversity. By 1850, indeed, a full half of all the Dutch in Indonesia were racially mixed — while to the early American settlers few things were as abhorrent as miscegenation.

The Dutch 'Indonesian model' transplanted easily to South Africa where early colonial society was, on every count, more open, tolerant and racially blind than its American analogue. True, like America, South Africa imported slaves (from the East Indies), but no part of South African society ever came to rely on slavery in the way America did, and South African treatment of slaves was always far more humane. In the American South a master who killed his slaves was guilty of no crime; in South Africa even cruel treatment of slaves led, at the very least, to the master being deprived of slaves and forbidden to purchase more.



Photos: Camera Press

'Keeping blacks in their place' — a South African township

Moreover, this pattern of South African tolerance only increased as the settler community grew. Inter-racial marriage was quite acceptable — Simon van der Stel, the greatest Governor of the early Cape, was a man of colour, as was his wife. Throughout the 18th century the proportion of inter-racial marriges increased from perhaps 10 per cent to perhaps 25 per cent of all marriages. Only in the 1790s — with the fateful arrival of the British at the Cape — did the burghers begin to grumble at having set in authority over them men 'of heathen descent'. By this time things had moved far in the opposite direction in America where men like Jefferson, while preaching equal rights, were energetically exterminating the Indians, stealing their land, and legislating for mass population removals via the Indian Removal Acts. On every count the early South Africans were as tolerantly pluralist as the Americans were murderously racist.

THE KEY to this divergence lay in the varying labour demands of the two settler communities. The Americans were frightened of employing Indians (who might cut your throat and then melt into the hills). They simply wanted Indian land and the Indians removed, preferring to depend on cheap white immigrant labour in the North and slaves in the plantation South. Slavery was, from the start, an explicitly racial institution and the racist attitudes inherent in it were general throughout the US. The

White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History by G. M. FREDRICKSON *Oxford* £12.50

The Diary of Maria Tholo edited by C. Hermer *distributed by Third World Publications, 151 Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 1RD* £5.75

Portrait of a People: A Personal Photographic Record of the South African Liberation Struggle by ELI WEINBERG *International Defence & Aid Fund* £4

In Black and White: Voices of Apartheid by B. HUTMACHER *Junction Books* £9.50 & £5.50

In America individual bigotry motivates the Klan while in South Africa institutionalised racism reaches into all aspects of life

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South's threats to free land and free labour and, in the end, to the democratic system itself were fiercely resented in the North. But Abraham Lincoln was typical enough in his strong avowals of white supremacy: he 'blamed' slavery and the South for race mixing and the spread of a black population within the US. Lincoln's own solution to the race problem was the advocacy of the colonisation or mass deportation of blacks . . .

In South Africa, on the other hand, there was no large plantation sector and no consequent appetite for slavery. Instead, frontier farmers showed a strong preference for the imposition of various forms of contract servitude or enforced apprenticeship. The coming of the British to the Cape finally ended what slavery there had been — but, via the Master and Servant Acts, greatly extended these forms of labour coercion, even re-enserfing the 'Coloured' population at the Cape. This system was able, however, to co-exist with a multi-racial franchise and there was no legalised discrimination by race.

The advance of 'scientific racism' and the coming of industrialism gradually reversed these contrasts. The growing black-white split within the respective labour markets produced the great urban race riots of the first world war era (St Louis 1917, Chicago 1919, Johannesburg 1922). In South Africa this led to a decisive turn towards a permanent system of legalised discrimination, with the transposition on to an industrial society of the forms of contract servitude nurtured on the frontier. In the US no industrial colour bar resulted. Racial antagonism was general but there were no 'homelands' for the blacks to go to. They *were* a minority, and they were substantially part of white Southern culture. The advance of the blacks was slowed by continuous private violence but only against the background of a general, illegitimising democratic culture, which 'told' in the end. In South Africa, on the other hand, blacks were held permanently in the migrant condition typical of American workers only in their first generation after arrival. Lynching, so common in the US, was unheard of in South Africa: instead the full power of the State was imposed on blacks.

ONE CAN only hint at the richness of Fredrickson's work — he simply has to be read. In a less academic way the *Diary of Maria Tholo* is compelling reading too. The diary charts the life of a black middle-class family in the Cape Townships through the riot year of 1976. For Mrs Tholo it was a year of terrible pain and suffering, of children rising bravely but madly against the police. The diary is a picture of gathering terror and an almost complete breakdown in social organisation — through which Mrs Tholo bravely keeps her children looking nice and strives towards the gentility of Tupperware parties in a township under siege. Over and over again she sees people — black or white — as having simply gone mad. Interestingly, she charts a sea-change in attitude among black schoolchildren as early as March 1976, particularly towards their history lessons. How did it come about, they asked, that blacks were always being punished for stealing the whites' cattle? Where did the whites *get* all those cattle from, how did they rear them in such abundance even though they were continually on the move? 'That's the question which always comes up in class. And that's when you just start scrubbing off the blackboard.'

Eli Weinberg's collection of photographs carries a fairly standard party-line text and the photographs are really all there is to his book. Some are marvellous and many are both historic and rare. It is, by the way, something of a political feat to compile a collection such as this and pretend that such organisations as the PAC, Black Consciousness and white liberals never existed. It's a bit soon, surely, for the CP/ANC to start declaring people non-persons?

Barbara Hutmacher's little book is disappointing. It consists of 37 little interviews with various 'voices of apartheid'. Overwhelmingly those interviewed are whites and liberals. On the whole few of them seem to think; they merely opine. The book is full of their mock-heroics which are, apparently, thought to be heroic. My favourite piece of silliness comes with the man — a top journalist, no less — who made his family's entire decision about emigration depend on whether Vorster made a major liberal turn in his next speech. (He didn't.) In a way such posturing is just as much an excuse for the failure to think as is Eli Weinberg's party clap-trap. One would like to imagine such people coming to grips with Fredrickson, but it seems a lot to ask. He not only makes you think, but think and think again.

FICTION

Nicholas Shrimpton

Talent for thought

The Hill Station by J.G. FARRELL *Weidenfeld* £6.50

When the British lost their Empire, in George Orwell's prophetic opinion, there would be no more taxis or strawberries and cream. England would become 'a cold and unimportant little island where we should all have to work very hard and live mainly on herrings and potatoes'. In the event, unless you actually worked in the colonial service or lived in an imperial port like Liverpool, the transition proved rather less traumatic. Unruffled by their loss of role, the British went quietly about their business. Taxis cruise the streets. Soft fruit ripens meltingly in season.

But change does not have to speak directly to the stomach to be significant, and our reluctance to dwell upon the most salient feature of our own recent history clearly goes much deeper than a mere *sang froid*. Malcolm Dean, in the memoir of J.G. Farrell which he appends to this posthumous fragment of his work, describes the novelist's insistence that he should read Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*. Of course it would be ridiculous to draw too firm a parallel between the endeavours of the two writers to present the history of their countries in fiction. Our colonial past is not deliberately distorted or suppressed. We may, indeed, ignore it because we find it irrelevant rather than uncomfortable. There remains nonetheless a striking community of interest between the Russian and the English writer. Solzenhitsyn's great novel sets out to tell his fellow-countrymen who they are by giving them an image of their own forbidden past. Farrell's remarkable trilogy (*Troubles, The Siege of Krishnapur* and *The Singapore Grip*) suggests that we too, the British, will not properly understand how we live now until we make some sense of our neglected national memories.

It would be a mistake, however, to imagine that an elaborate ambition of this kind was conceived from the moment that Farrell began work on *Troubles*. The movement from his last 'unhistorical' novel, *A Girl in the Head*, to the first volume of the trilogy was much less abrupt than one might, with hindsight, suppose. The nervous experimentation was abandoned and the tone became surer. But both books concerned themselves with prematurely elderly men in decaying resorts. Both proffered a comic accumulation of grotesque detail. And both arrive at sombre conclusions.

THE DIFFERENCE, simply, was that in *Troubles* both setting and events were, for the first time, unembarrassedly symbolic. The eccentric inhabitants of the Majestic Hotel are not just specimens of the obsolete Anglo-Irish aristocracy. They are an image of that aristocracy, in the crumbling fabric of its power. Even the hero's shell-shock is a national as well as a personal symptom, expressing the failure of will which makes the abandonment of Empire inevitable.

The imperial theme, of course, links *Troubles* very directly to *The Siege of Krishnapur*. In formal terms, however, the gulf between them is wide. *Troubles* remains an image, and a fantastical image at that. Ideas are suggested rather than discussed. The weird decay of the allegorical hotel sits awkwardly with the documentary detail of the inserted newspaper cuttings. By the time Farrell published *The Siege of Krishnapur*, in 1973, he had not merely discovered history as a subject for fiction, he had discovered how to write it.

Both *The Siege* and its successor, *The Singapore Grip*, have compelling plots, abundant humour, diverse human interest and vivid local colour. But the characteristic which distinguishes them most sharply from the rest of current English fiction is their sheer intellectual muscle. In *The Siege* Farrell confronts the loss of cultural self-confidence which (in his eyes as early as 1857) threatens the imperial process. The Collector's enthusiasm for the Great Exhibition is an expression of the missionary ideal of the European Enlightenment. The Indian Mutiny represents a first, dark discovery that other races may have their reasons for rejecting it. With *The Singapore Grip*, in

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1978, Farrell moved beyond even this, to a full-scale debate on the economics and morality of colonialism.

As this rapid development suggests, Farrell was not a novelist working on an assured plateau of flawless achievement. Even *The Singapore Grip* has its moments of miscalculation. The tragedy of his death is precisely that his talent was still maturing, his chosen seam beginning to yield richer and richer ore. Weidenfeld should be congratulated for their generous decision to publish the 137 pages of unfinished first draft which constitute *The Hill Station*. The fact remains that it's a painful experience to read them. The wonderful quickness with character and landscape, the voracious enthusiasm for ideas are all there. But just as that familiar grip on our attention begins to tighten, the curtain falls. We are left with some tantalising hints, the brief diary which Farrell wrote while researching *The Siege* and three pious memoirs. Death has taken many a lesser writer from us in the last decade. □

POETRY

Edna Longley

Subtitling

Looking into the Deep End by DAVID SWEETMAN *Faber* £3
English Subtitles by PETER PORTER *Oxford* £3.50
As We Know by JOHN ASHBERY *Carcanet* £4.95
Single Ladies by MEDBH MCGUCKIAN *Interim Press, 3 Thornton Close, Budleigh Salterton, Devon EX9 6PJ* 75p

Have Faber sent a belated rocket to Mars? Some of David Sweetman's images undeniably ape the fluent metamorphoses of Craig Raine and Christopher Reid: 'the greengrocer/piling bound asparagus as if to burn a saint', a pig's 'two-pin snout', 'the old school python'. A Martian, or Italian-Chinese, view of knitting is the worst instance of purl where plain would do: 'an old lady/plaiting spaghetti with a chopstick in each hand.' Yet such excesses are the lunatic fringe of Sweetman's deeper and central interest in the nature of perception. His best passages communicate 'the menace of the ordinary' by means of more subtly adjusted perspectives. In the title-poem a boy unused to water sees it as 'a fascinating parcel, crumpled paper/surface, reflections of ravelled string', and therefore drowns.

This poem fuses imagery with narrative, but Sweetman cannot always lodge his genuine sensibility in an organic structure, syntax and form. His A-bomb poem, 'The Art of Pottery', which ultimately moves from pot to potter 'sagging like a tired dish', manages the transition awkwardly:

> Today is the never-tired-of moment,
> the bank-vault kiln reopened.
> And yet, this once, heat and shine
> are nothing when behind him breaks a light
> brighter than the city's million filaments . . .

Trying to hold his perceptions within a single vision, or a history within a single moment, Sweetman leans heavily on 'yet', 'when', 'but' and especially 'while'. He over-works participial clauses and anxious punctuations like 'today', 'suddenly', 'now'. This betrays, too, a faltering of rhythmical intuition, so that his most memorable cadences occur as self-contained local effects: 'Uncle August' 'listened silently to his wife's complaints/while turning his wedding ring round and round/as if somehow to lower the volume'. Sweetman's very concern with looking, memory, inventions and 'Creative Acts' suggests the preliminary exploration of an aesthetic. He is perhaps caught between two approaches — which up to a point represent successive phases in English poetry — the poem as argument and the poem as image.

PETER Porter's new collection, *English Subtitles*, stays firmly on the discursive side of the divide. His meditations wear various fictional and mythological guises, but these are fig-leaves for the poet worrying away at 'The Imperfection of the World' — a world in which 'Nobody feels well after his fortieth birthday', where 'there are no second chances in a universe/Which must get on with the business of living'. When Porter's eloquence blurs the natural boundaries of a poem, his middle-aged blues take on a wordy triteness:

> It is time to recompose the face
> Into a serious map, the children now
> Envied creatures across a room, the case
> Being settled for the present.

This seems more said than embodied: absolute constructions break the sentence's back, and no chain of sound comes to the rescue. *English Subtitles* composes an admirably 'serious map'; but if the monologues are not quite dramatic enough to establish personae, neither are they quite lyrical enough to create Porter's own face. And while Porter's instincts are to 'feign' rather than confess, his feigning can fall short — as when he gives the poetic show away: 'I too, maker of this/Near dramatic monologue', 'Regard this/Poem up to now as preparation' (two line-breaks on 'this'). At such junctures, a poem's artifice must be impregnable — to deflect a literal response.

John Ashbery, of course, does this sort of thing all the time, though from an *a priori* standpoint. *As We Know* (epistemology declaring itself in the title) is a marathon run, all the way to the starting-tape:

> In the beginning of speech the question
> Of frontiers is taken up again.
> And the trees and buildings are porous
> And the dome of heaven.
>
> The talk leads nowhere but is
> inside its space.

The latter couplet looks like a poetic version of psychobabble, as does much else in 'Litany', a 'polyphonic dialogue' occupying 65 pages of double free-verse columns — the layout at least is beautifully designed. Ashbery's premise, that the language of poetry keeps on sinking into the 'porous' language of life, makes the poem exhaustedly exhaustive, deliberately invertebrate, an endlessly subdividing amoeba. Promising images and witty ideas are submerged beneath the garrulous flow, which amounts to yet another stab at stream-of-consciousness, with the emphasis on the consciousness. 'Litany's'

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'chronic reverie' includes a prosaic essay on criticism that refurbishes some fairly antique Modernist ideas: the impossibility of any coherent synthesis or audience 'in a Silver Age/Wherein a multitude of glittering, interesting/Things and people attack one/Like a blizzard at every street crossing'. In fact, Ashbery's verbal blizzards blot out distinctions, obsessively rewrite the same poem about rewriting the same poem. One can take the point, but not *ad infinitum*.

After Ashbery, *Single Ladies* has the seductive concentration of the thing itself:

> They set the whins on fire along the road.
> I wonder what controls it, can the wind hold
> That snake of orange motion to the hills,
> Away from the houses?

Medbh McGuckian's rich images often express lack of control, yet rarely get out of control. Her occasional lapses as an interpreter of female experience lie in the direction of packed obscurity rather than rhetoric. Like Paul Muldoon, who introduces this pamphlet, she is a phraser, a poser of riddles, a subverter of conventional Irish lore:

> What is more beautiful than potatoes
> in bloom?
> A redhead swinging poteen from her
> breasts . . .

Apart from its other original merits, *Single Ladies* conveys the exciting impression that Cathleen ni Houlihan, that much-abused Muse, has found a voice of her own. □

Bill Greenwell

Sketchy

A Lonely Business: A Self-Portrait of James Pope-Hennessy edited by Peter Quennell *Weidenfeld* £12.50

'For his biographer,' observes James Pope-Hennessy in *Trollope,* 'a dead man who has judiciously left behind him his own self-portrait poses a number of problems.' Pope-Hennessy himself left no self-portrait, but the task of constructing one seems to present several problems to Peter Quennell. His introduction admits as much; by the time one has glided through it, the assertive subtitle is reduced to 'rough materials for a self-portrait' and eventually 'a sketch'. In fact, this 'self-portrait' is little more than a faintly suggestive doodle.

The package contains selected letters, to which are attached an 'intermittent diary' (1950-52) and seven previously unpublished accounts of meetings with sundry royals — these last were background for his biography of Queen Mary. The letters, if only by virtue of their relative number, provide the main taste in this odd *mélange à trois*. Pope-Hennessy himself puts his foot on the problem when noting, of a friend's use of love-letters between the Brownings, that, 'Like everything else that is not a conscious work of art, [letters] want *reviving*.' (My italics). Quennell has practised little resuscitation here. It's obvious, of course, why most of the letters included were chosen: for that plink-plink-fizz of some stray comment about writing, or the ssssch-you-know-who of a notable name. For the ordinary reader, rather than the friend, these tiny bubbles burst too quickly, leaving only colourless liquid. And there's the rub: as an old pal, Quennell's not the ideal editor — his success could only ever be partial. Meanwhile, the diary fills 39 pages; the cameos are only faintly canny.

Pope-Hennessy was worth more. He was a gifted biographer, the kind who kindles interest even when the subject is unknown or actually anathema to the reader. When he was murdered in 1974 ('died suddenly and tragically' is the resounding euphemism here), there disappeared a stylist as polished and personable as Lytton Strachey or George Orwell; his writing evokes both. This is particularly true of *Verandah*, which Quennell rightly praises. It artfully traces the career of his grandfather, John Pope-Hennessy, whose colonial service twitched the eyebrows of his civil servant masters. The book quietly brings the background forward, using the biographical narrative to expose the iniquities of imperialism, which a letter in this selection describes as one of the most 'aesthetically criminal things evolved since the world began.' (Mind you, *aesthetically*?)

However, *Verandah*'s protagonist is more the grandson than the grandfather. Although more self-effacing than Orwell, Pope-Hennessy emerges as the ultimate focus — a traveller whose mildly ironic, modulated voice dominates the proceedings. The same is true of *Sins of the Fathers,* an account of Atlantic slave-trading from the 16th to the 18th century. Quennell thinks this sometimes 'over-emotional', as though this were a fault; far from it, since it gives us a sense of the man:

> I have often been admonished to 'make it quite clear that it was the Blacks who sold each other' . . . . . Here is a train of thought that will carry its passengers merrily and far. Catch it, snuggle down, draw the blinds and . . . . it will rattle you safely along through many a sombre defile and pitchy tunnel of human history . . . How could the guillotine have been a painful instrument when its use was advocated by a qualified medical practitioner?

There's far more Pope-Hennessy in this passage from *Sins of the Fathers* than in the royal snapshots appended to the 'self-portrait' — more too, than in the hurried letters. In one, he hears in an upstairs room 'little tappetings and soft bumps, and strange rhythmic steps of someone poised on the staircase'. This might serve as an apposite description of his whimsical style in the letters. That they possess some stylistic verve is apparent. But a genuine self-portrait requires the provision of a more generous and catholic selection of his writing.

Nor will footnotes and a quick introduction suffice. Firmer use of biographical links, and an anthology of his work — including, by all means, snippets of letter and diary — would provide readers not familiar with Pope-Hennessy with a taste of his personality. There might even be space for his royal trinkets: not for his glimpses of the Duchess of Windsor, which seem only to tell us that, being American, she pronounced 'Duke' to rhyme with Farouk, and called a ribbon a rib-bon. Not for them, but for a flash of Archbishop Fisher, 'a benign-looking egg in gaiters'. In a letter Pope-Hennessy describes analogies as like bits of elastic which, 'as soon as you stretch them, snap back in your face'. He was too crafty a craftsman to let that happen. □

Michael Hofmann

Migrations of an older romantic

Whenever he felt sad, he headed for the Rhine
and made a conquest of one of the maidens.
It was his heartland: he loved the vineyards
on the slopes, the endless railway tunnels,
the coal-barges going to Switzerland and back.

— His women were scarcely into their teens;
they were 'von' this or 'von' that, but they had
enlightenment Christian names like Esther or Clara.
They remembered him for the rest of their lives.
These hectic love-affairs broke up his loneliness.

and briefly injected him with the enthusiasm
he found so hard to come by anymore. The opiate
of underage Muses; recidivism for the sake of
inspiration. Though the songs that came out of it
were, in his late manner, drab and pietistic.

Rather absurdly, he would dedicate them to these
water-nymphs, his quick geographical mistresses.
And if they were lucky, he'd write them a letter
as well, informing them that they hadn't ever
really understood him; but then, nobody did . . .

Sometimes he even admitted that they had failed
to match the impression of his very first visit
to their arterial river — in their parents' time,
a generation ago. With a fellow-poet and fabulist,
his bosom friend and future brother-in-law,

who had done the right thing and died young . . .

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FESTIVALS 81

Charles Fox looks at the continuing vitality and importance of jazz festivals

A long, hot summer

ANTECEDENTS are often hard to run to earth in jazz, a music, after all, whose earliest genius, Louis Armstrong, was never totally sure which house he had been born in nor the exact day in 1900 that it happened. So deciding when the first jazz festival took place is trickier than it sounds. What, some might suggest, were all those goings-on — picnics and parades — in New Orleans, or aboard Mississippi riverboats? Yet the music there was either functional or peripheral, an aid to dancing or marching, a background for eating or flirtation. Festivals are really concerned with people paying to sit down and listen to jazz for its own sake.

Which makes the likeliest date 29 May 1938 and the place Randall's Island, close to where the Harlem and East rivers meet, wedged in between the Bronx, Manhattan and Long Island. 'Radio Salesman Who Sold 1,000 Gas-Stoves In One Broadcast Sells Swing To The Masses', ran a rather unwieldy headline in the *Melody Maker,* acclaiming the nous of Martin Block, who arranged a 'Carnival of Swing' to raise funds for a local branch of the American Federation of Musicians. Twenty-five thousand people turned up to hear a bizarrely varied bill: Slim and Slam plugged their novelty number, 'Flat Feet Floogie'; a fresh-faced Bobby Hackett played 'Singin' the Blues', conjuring up memories of Bix. But towering above everything else was the performance by Duke Ellington's orchestra, stopping the show —just as they did at Newport 18 years later — with 'Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue'.

Yet all that — and much more — was crammed into five-and-three-quarter hours, whereas any self-respecting jazz festival now stretches into a second or even a third day. Not surprisingly, that lengthier kind of festival surfaced first in Europe (jazz, after all, got taken seriously on this side of the Atlantic long before it did in America). Hugues Panassié, the shrewdest yet the most intolerant of pre-war jazz critics, organised 'the first International Jazz Festival' at Nice in the summer of 1948, with Louis Armstrong's newly-formed All Stars at its apex. A year later, in Paris, Panassié's arch-rival, Charles Delaunay, offered beboppers as well as traditionalists, even coaxing Sidney Bechet and Charlie Parker to jam alongside each other on the blues. Panassié was stirred into putting on the first jazz fringe festival (Leadbelly sang chain-gang songs in the shadow of the Sorbonne, a handkerchief covering his left hand to stop young guitarists from copying his fingering).

Not until 1954 did the American jazz festival really take shape. It happened on the grass courts of the 19th-century gabled casino at Newport, Rhode Island. That festival's producer, George Wein, a 29-year-old pianist, cannot have realised that he was embarking on a full-time career. The Newport Festival long ago defected to New York City, but Wein still masterminds it — and transports his roster of musicians all over Europe as well. Other festivals popped up across America, sometimes helping newer musicians on their way (Charlie Mingus at Monterey) or revitalising a few veterans. Jazz entered its first stately home when Lord Montagu staged a series of festivals at Beaulieu Abbey, culminating in that evening when TV viewers watched Acker Bilk fans lobbing toffees into the bells of the modernists' saxophones.

That clash of loyalties symbolised, in a ludicrous way, something much more fundamental. The 1950s was the obvious decade for the jazz festival to start doing a useful job: the music was half a century old and acquiring an historical perspective, making it possible for a festival to provide a balanced diet of classics and more dangerously up-to-date music. Most of the New Orleans heroes were alive, many still no more than middle-aged. Bebop had been accepted by most fair-minded jazz fans. More startling inno-

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vations lay in wait only a few years ahead. At the same time the patterns of social dancing were changing, rock and roll moving in, jazz beginning to retreat. There were always the night spots, but concerts suddenly seemed to be a sensible alternative.

Meanwhile the jazz festival became an event at which aficionados could hear a formidable range of musicians, often within a single afternoon or evening. Continental Europe adapted quickly, its long tradition of festivals merely expanding to take in an extra musical genre. Britain took longer, possibly because hard-core fans were wary about listening to jazz in the open air (four decades of concentrating on gramophone records had bred a very specialized kind of conservatism). At another level, the cultural establishment was — and frequently still is — unaware of the importance of jazz, rarely allowing it even token representation in music festivals (plenty of halls all over Britain still refuse to allow even the most elegant jazz performers to use the same piano as classical soloists). Bit by bit all that is changing. At Aldeburgh early in October, the Benson and Hedges Music Festival has Benny Goodman playing with Sir Clifford Curzon, Pierre Fournier and the Amadeus String Quartet but ending the week blowing jazz. Next September the Rye Festival continue their jazz policy by allotting one evening to the Bobby Wellins Quartet. And the Belfast Festival — at Queen's University — has always contained a sizeable amount of jazz (Illinois Jacquet spent an entire week there last November).

The real gain, though, has been the emergence of regular British jazz festivals. The one with the highest concentration of celebrities is undoubtedly Capital Radio's. Last year their plans were thrown awry by the fire at Alexandra Palace; this July they shift operations to Clapham Common. The peripatetic George Wein is responsible for a strong contingent of Americans: such undimmable stars as Dizzy Gillespie and Sarah Vaughan head a bill that also contains Dexter Gordon, McCoy Tyner and the born-again Art Pepper. Earlier that month the Bracknell Jazz Festival judiciously blends the newish with the really new. Highspots will include the Chico Freeman Quartet and John Surman collaborating with the bassist Miroslav Vitous. But perhaps the strength of this festival is the way it encourages the home product, regularly commissioning a composition or two, giving obscure yet sometimes dazzling musicians a chance to make their mark.

None of this could happen without some kind of subsidy. Bracknell actually had its Arts Council grant increased this year. Several local authorities also act as patrons. Camden, with its twice-yearly Jazz Weeks, must be the most adventurous artistically, but others are beginning to catch up. Hammersmith & Fulham have a particularly broad range of activity, including a play about the clarinetist Leon Roppolo. Up in the Lake District, Kendal will be presenting the Polish saxophonist Zbigniew Namyslowsi as well as the Carla Bley Band. Radio Hallam promotes a festival in Sheffield while Metro Radio is the major sponsor of the Newcastle Jazz Festival. Chichester Theatre put on an annual festival as part of their normal policy: this year its artists range from Sonny Rollins to a

3RD Hammersmith & Fulham **JAZZ FESTIVAL MAY 10–17 1981**

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band made up of ex-members of Louis Armstrong's All Stars, with two British trumpeters, Keith Smith and Digby Fairweather, taking turns at deputising for Satchmo. Those performers, and others, also congregate in Cork for a festival backed by John Player Cigarettes. Straightforward commercial sponsorship turns up elsewhere too: Dryburgh's Brewery provide the cash for an avidly traditional jazz occasion in Edinburgh. Until this year the Welsh Jazz Festival received support from CAMRA, but now its backers include the Co-op, a couple of banks and various local traders, as well as appropriate arts associations.

At the ICA Theatre, between 19 and 23 May, Derek Bailey assembles Company, his international group of free improvisers, all skilled at projecting an identity within this treacherous genre. They include at least two Americans: Steve Lacy and the trombonist George Lewis — on no account to be confused with the late lamented clarinetist of that name. If free improvising stems from the techniques of straightforward jazz, tap-dancing reflects something of that music's rhythmic vigour, the best dancers operating like good jazz drummers. Luckily a few veterans are still around to demonstrate what once seemed to be a dying art. Will Gaines performs in Cardiff before setting off into deeper Wales. He also turns up at Hammersmith & Fulham, supervising a tap-dancing workshop. To cherish the half-forgotten while encouraging the very new may be an ambition which only a few individual festivals achieve. But collectively they get close to doing exactly that. □

Some of the most attractive jazz festivals taking place this summer:
Bracknell Jazz Festival *3-4 July*
Camden Jazz Festival *26-31 October*
Capital Radio Jazz Festival *18, 19, 25 & 26 July*
Cardiff — 8th Welsh Jazz Festival *30 April-9 May*
Chichester Festival Theatre Jazz International *21-25 October*
Cork Jazz Festival *23-26 October*
Edinburgh Festival of Hot Traditional Jazz *23-27 August*
Greenwich Festival — Jazz *20-28 June*
Hammersmith & Fulham Jazz Festival *10-17 May*
Kendal Jazz Festival *24 October-1 November*
Newcastle Jazz Festival *9-17 May*
Sheffield — Radio Hallam International Jazz Festival *3-6 June*
Wick Poetry/Jazz/Folk Festival *31 July-2 August*

Gavin Ewart on the trials and compensations of reading at poetry festivals abroad

Cold on a bridge in Struga

I'VE BEEN, in my lifetime so far, to three overseas Festivals: the Adelaide Arts Festival in 1978, the Struga Poetry Evenings in 1980, a UNESCO/PEN Seminar in Copenhagen this year (I count this as a Festival, because it felt like one). In Britain I've taken part, as a single poetry-reading item and once as the organiser of a poetry workshop, in Festivals at York, Lancaster and St Ives. I have also been asked to write a poem to be printed on a T-shirt, for the Ilkley Literature Festival — a commission I accepted.

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whole thing as a kind of Outward Bound course. For example, immediately you get off the plane in Australia (after 24 hours that seem more like 48) you are interviewed by the *Adelaide Advertiser*. Later you may get into trouble, as I did, for writing in *Vole* that you didn't see a pretty girl in Australia until you moved from Adelaide to Melbourne. You may have to read your poems in a large room with no microphone, a guy striking chords on a guitar at your elbow (misplaced artistic collaboration) and talkative Macedonian intellectuals carrying on loud conversations at the tables. You may read a poem in your own language, only to find that the translation read through the microphone afterwards is the translation of a quite different poem. You may be told to be ready at 6.30 in the morning for an excursion that takes off at 9.30 (and there may not be enough buses). Planes are like buses — equally likely to run late. The French delegation in Struga swore that JAT, the initials of Yugoslav Airlines, stand for *jamais à temps*. The traveller's tales are many, and most of them likely to have a deterrent effect.

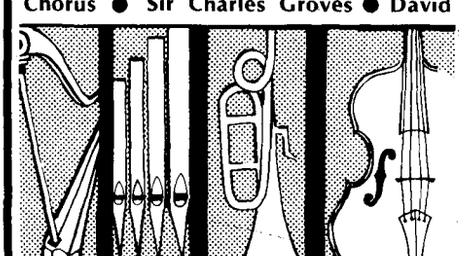
However, there are compensations. The wine, principally; South Australian wine is wonderful, and Macedonian wine has a lot to be said for it. Denmark has only imported French wine at huge prices; but the local drinks — Tuborg lager and Akvavit (if you enjoy seed cake) — are ample compensation for this. The food too, on these excursions, is never less than interesting. You can find yourself eating cowheel at a farewell banquet. Again, because of the wine, this seems to matter less.

I am a reserved person (unless I am really drunk, and then like most habitually reserved persons I become a monologist). For this reason I always find conversation with my fellow delegates something of a trial. I don't like being talked at and there's no doubt that people who take part in Festivals are extremely talkative, and often not much disposed to listen. So many poets nowadays, of all nationalities, are academics; as such, very naturally, they are used to expressing their thoughts to a student body. They are, in my view, over-articulate. The first question they ask, on meeting you, is *Where do you teach?* A poet who isn't a professor, they can hardly understand.

The countryside, the conducted tours and the shopping (I am not talking here of Lancaster and St Ives so much as the Continental and antipodean venues) are also compensations for hardship. It's nice to be able to buy a small silver kangaroo for one's wife or the peculiar local (very folkloristic) pipe with which shepherds summon sheep, a woollen hat with a bobble on it from Iceland, or a didgeridoo for one's son. All this is good.

I don't distrust and dislike 'abroad' in the Lucky Jim sense. Indeed I have always enjoyed strange places and things. I positively enjoy, as in Yugoslavia and Denmark, being in surroundings where I don't understand a single word of what is spoken around me. On the other hand, to revert to the cultural matters which inspire these expeditions, I do think that you have to know the language, the background and the history of a people extremely well before you can truly appreciate their poetry. In this respect I agree with Philip Larkin, who has expressed similar doubts. But I would still qualify this statement by saying that there are poets, and there are poems, that are to a large degree accessible — or at

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra ● Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra ● Manchester Camerata ● Fires of London ● Michala Petri Trio ● Ronnie Scott Jazz Quartet ● Whispering Wind Band ● The Light Blues ● Festival Chorus ● Sir Charles Groves ● David Atherton ● Peter Maxwell Davies Martin Merry Gary Karr Nigel Kennedy Gillian Weir Richard Stilgoe Robert Tear Michael Rippon Philip Ledger Alan Hacker



CHESTER
Summer Music Festival
25 JUL - 1 AUG 1981

Full programme from:
Festival Office, 6 Northway, Curzon Park, Chester. S.A.E. Please

Artistic Director Martin Merry

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least seem to be accessible. Enzensberger was 'It' the year I went to Struga, winner of the Golden Wreath for 1980, and I thought I could get something from his poems, even in German. My German is not good, and needs dictionaries; but my Yugoslavian is non-existent, so the translation in the Festival selection of his poems was useless to me. This isn't a complaint — it's a beautifully produced and printed book.

To a certain extent one is driven to be frivolous in one's attitude to the poetry. Unless one were a polymath or a first-class linguist, one would be bound to find most of it incomprehensible. This makes one thankful for small mercies. In the middle of a reading by a Chinaman it is very cosy suddenly to hear the two words 'Hitler' and 'Mussolini', and to know that this is a poem about the struggle against Fascism. As far as I was concerned, they stuck out like two sore thumbs, in the same way, in the Macedonian translation that followed.

I can deal with French, if I have a text and it's not too fast; and the same applies to Italian. I also find these two languages extremely mellifluous. In this respect they are a joy to hear. 'What though the field be lost?/All is not lost . . .' There is a kind of incantatory quality about spoken poetry which can be enjoyed even if the words are not understood, though it helps to have some idea of what the poet is driving at.

For any British poet who has to read his or her poems abroad (except in places like the University of Copenhagen where they all know English like the backs of their hands) I would always recommend a simple poem that makes its effect by repetition as the most suitable. Rhyme will be lost, form will vanish, as the poem is read aloud; but, as in opera, the repetition of a line gives the audience a chance to pick up clues as to what is going on. The nuances of great sensitivity are hard to convey as one stands in front of a microphone on a bridge, with the listening multitudes on each side of the canal and small sailing-boats continually turning and counter-turning in the water at one's feet. But rhetoric or a series of strong political statements (about the wickedness of Stalin or Mrs Thatcher) should prevail even in these conditions. It is, in fact, bloody cold and all poets attempting the bridge at Struga are advised to wrap up warmly; or else to ensure that they sit at the back of the stage (for it is in effect a stage) so that their poetic colleagues in front act as windbreakers.

In all Festivals, home and away, there is a lot to enjoy. Even if the reading of papers on 'Poetry as a language of cultural identity' is not entirely your cup of tea, there are many worse ways of passing the time. Many delegates are pleasant, and even interesting. Sitting boozing by a lake in good Mediterranean weather could never be described as hardship. Although you may regard yourself, or be regarded, as a cultural ambassador, the duties are not very arduous. You can even, if you are that kind of writer, write poems about your experiences. Travelogue poetry, after all, is a recognised genre.

Also, in the way of souvenirs, together with the duty-free bottles of slivovitz and the woolly hats, and as well as experience of other places and people, you will find that you acquire some interesting black plastic briefcases. These are issued to all delegates for car-

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pfa
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Prospectus from: Tourist Information Centre, Broad Street, Kirkwall, Orkney

rying their books and papers. My Australian one is inscribed: With the Compliments of Macmillan and SUN BOOKS. The Yugoslav briefcase, an altogether grander affair, carries a golden wreath, the date (1980), and in Russian, Macedonian, English and French, the legend: Struga Poetry Evenings. *Soirées Poétiques de Struga.* Nobody carrying this around could ever doubt that they had been 'abroad'.

Anyone who would like to hear some poetry at one of this year's festivals in this country can do so in the following places at the following dates:
Bracknell Literature Festival *31 July-2 August*
Cambridge Poetry Festival *5-10 June*
Cheltenham Festival of Literature *5-18 October*
Cley Little Festival of Poetry, Norfolk *20 & 22 May*
Hammersmith Poetry Festival *10-19 June*
Lancaster Festival of Literature *27 April-4 May*
Oxford Poetry Festival *4-11 May*
Stratford-upon-Avon Poetry Festival *5 July-30 August*

Selected festivals

The selection of festivals listed below is not comprehensive but further information can be obtained from the Arts Council publication *Festivals in Great Britain 1981.*

Aldeburgh Festival of Music and Arts *12-28 June*
Aldeburgh — Benson & Hedges Festival *26 Sept-4 Oct*
Arundel Festival *29 August-6 September*
Ashington Festival, Northumberland *10-12 May*
Bath Festival *22 May-7 June*
Battle Festival *17-26 July*
Brighton Festival *2-17 May*
Bromsgrove Festival *26 April-9 May*
Buxton Festival *25 July-9 August*
Cambridge Festival *18 July-2 August*
Canterbury — King's Week *9-15 July*
Cheltenham Festival *5-19 July*
Chester Festival '81 *27 June-12 July*
Chester Summer Music *25 July-1 August*
Chichester Festival Theatre Season *5 May-19 September*
Chichester 906 Festivities *6-18 July*
Dawlish Arts Festival *15 June-3 July*
Durham Music Festival *25 October-15 November*
Exeter Festival *23 May-6 June*
Glyndebourne Festival Opera Season *27 May-11 August*
Guernsey — Notre Dame Festival de Musique *1 July-16 August*
Harrogate International Festival *29 July-12 August*
Houghton Feast *2-11 October*
Hunstanton Festival of Arts *10-24 May*
Kendal Folk Festival *28-30 August*
King's Lynn Festival *24 July-1 August*

1981 RHYMNEY VALLEY ARTS FESTIVAL
18-31 October

AMONGST ARTISTES APPEARING WILL BE: The Apollo Group, Alun Williams BBC, Victor Blackman, Atarah's Band, Michael Collins (clarinet), Peter Savidge, baritone, also Musicians competition and visual arts section.

Full programme details from: Entertainments Offices, Council Offices, Park Road, Hengoed, Mid Glamorgan CF8 7YB. Tel: Hengoed 0443 812241.

9-14 Aug 1981
WINCHESTER SUMMER FESTIVAL CONCERTS
Details: (s.a.e.) Secretary, 52 Ravensdale Avenue, London N12 9HT. Tel: 01-445 7891

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Lake District — Mary Wakefield Westmorland Music Festival *9-16 May*
Leeds Music Festival *16-30 May*
Leicester Arts Festival *2nd & 3rd weeks of June*
London
English Bach Festival *14-27 May*
Festival of the City of London *5-18 July*
Greenwich Festival *13-28 June*
Hackney Festival *June/July*
London Dance Umbrella *12 October-15 November*
London Entertains — the Fourth Festival of Many Cultures *8-13 July*
National Festival of Music for Youth *15-18 July*
South Bank Summer Music *9-23 August*
Ludlow Festival *27 June-12 July*
Malvern Festival *17 May-7 June*
Mananan Festival of Music and Arts *19-30 June*
Manchester — Hallé Summer Festival *23 June-18 July*
Minack Theatre Festival *22 June-5 September*
Newbury Spring Festival *13-23 May*
Newcastle Festival *7-18 October*
Nottingham Festival *30 May-14 June*
Pershore Festival *19 June-4 July*
Polesden Lacey Open Air Theatre *1-4 & 8-12 July*
Rye Festival *5-12 September*
St Albans — International Organ Festival *4-11 July*
St Ives September Festival *5-19 September*
Salisbury Festival *5-15 September*
Scotland
Edinburgh International Festival *22 August-11 September*
Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival *22-30 May*
Dunfermline Abbey Church Music *20-27 June*
Orkney, St Magnus Festival *19-24 June*
Perth Festival of the Arts *20-31 May*
Pitlochry Festival Theatre Season *19 May-17 October*
Stirling District Festival *23 May-7 June*
Sidmouth International Folklore Festival *31 July-7 August*
Southern Cathedrals Festival *22-26 July*
Stroud Festival *10-24 October*
Three Choirs Festival *23-29 August*
Truro — Three Spires Festival *21-26 June*
Wales
Barmouth Arts Festival *7-19 September*
Fishguard Festival *25 July-2 August*
Llandaff Festival *9-18 June*
Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod *7-12 July*
Rhymney Valley Arts Festival *18-31 October*
Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales *1-9 August*
St Asaph, North Wales Music Festival *20-26 September*
Swansea Festival of Music and the Arts *3-24 October*
Warrington Festival *9-30 May*
West Riding Cathedrals Festival *16-18 October*
Wooburn Festival *5-19 September*
York Early Music Festival *10-26 July*

Worcester
THREE CHOIRS
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For brochure, please send foolscap s.a.e. to International Organ Festival Society (Box Office), P.O. Box 80, St Albans AL3 4HR, Herts. (Telephone: St Albans 64738 10 a.m.-6 p.m. after 1 June.)

34th ALDEBURGH FESTIVAL
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NEXT ARTS

GUIDE
29 MAY
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Don Juan: Cottesloe

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

Time warping

Measure for Measure by SHAKESPEARE *Lyttelton*
The Knight of the Burning Pestle by BEAUMONT *Aldwych*
Don Juan by MOLIERE *Cottesloe*

The National was to be the place where we would see Shakespeare played straight or straightish, meaning without too strong or odd a slant being given the text by presumptuous direction; and I persist in believing that this principle isn't responsible for what has, admittedly, often looked more like bardophagy than bardophilia on the theatre's part. Uninspired acting and production, not anyone's failure to set the action in Mussolini's Italy or Kennedy's Camelot, explain the sheer awfulness of its recent *Julius Caesar*. So one is bound to wonder if an all-Caribbean *Measure for Measure* doesn't indicate that someone, somewhere in the South-Bank powerhouse has lost his nerve. With its casino and flea-market settings, its bikes, briefcases, tuxedos and gun-toting cops, its calypso music and climactic carnival, and even an intercom to announce Isabella's arrival at government headquarters, it seems a pretty violent act of apostasy, an unabashed return to the amiable lunacies of the late Sixties and early Seventies.

A recent execution in Saudi Arabia should remind us that chastity is still taken pretty seriously in parts of our own world; but that doesn't, of course, stop us asking if Claudio could really be condemned to death for having sex with his fiancée, or Isabella could so unselfquestioningly refuse to save him by sacrificing her virginity, in post-independence Guyana or Trinidad. Yet accusations of implausibility are perhaps rather nitpicking. The real worry is the limiting effect on the play as a whole of this tropical 'Vienna', with its indisputably, indeed gruesomely modern ruler.

Myself, I am not altogether impressed by Professor Wilson Knight's view of the skulking, manoeuvring, manipulating Duke as a benign God-substitute; but I feel that Michael Rudman's production errs in the opposite direction, since Stefan Kalipha is permitted to play him first as a languid gambler, a spoiled playboy, and then, when he has adopted his friar's disguise, as a furtive wangler, neither genuinely pious nor personally the least impressive. It is surely a simplification to suggest that the character has handed temporary power over to Angelo solely because he's too cowardly, too besotted with easy popularity, to exercise it rigorously himself. As it is, the reading combines with the Caribbean cavortings to transform what should be at least partly a parable of Christian mercy in action — the other cheek offered the erring Angelo, instead of 'measure for measure' — into a study of the corruptions of an immature nation struggling to evolve a workable criminal code. The permanent becomes local, topical, transitory.

Yet I have to confess I enjoyed it, right down to the clever-clever rhymes impudently sung into the text by that lovely small-time mobster, Peter Straker's Lucio. At least it offers some of our best black actors a chance to prove what they can do; and what most of them can do is handle Shakespeare's rhythms much better than their West Indian accents and relative inexperience would lead one to expect. Oscar James turns the bawd Pompey into a rolling, straw-hatted Lord of Misrule; Yvette Harris's cool, forbidding, almost mulish Isabella proves capable of a marvellous fury when her emotional defences are finally breached; and Norman Beaton, whether dressed in bishop's purple or general's grey, is as chilling an Angelo as I can recall. If he misses some of the inner turmoil we'd expect of a Melford Stevenson who had suddenly discovered in himself the makings of the Cambridge rapist, it's because he's already so effectively established himself as the dryest and most impassive of bureaucrats, habitually strict with everyone, including himself. Such a man would be more likely grimly to brood, as Beaton does, than ostentatiously agonise. When this sombre, sinister magistrate asked the Duke for 'immediate sentence and subsequent death', he meant it, and, for once, we wanted it too. How could he live with the humiliation? And wouldn't the world be better off without him?

NORTH OF the river, still more radical things are being done to Beaumont. Huge segments of his most celebrated satire have been verbally as well as visually updated, presumably by the director, Michael Bogdanov. The smug Jacobean grocer who interrupts the workaday melodrama *The London Merchant,* and insists that his apprentice takes over the stage, has been transformed into his own distant descendant, a truculent Thatcherite from Billericay or Surbiton who storms out of the stalls with a 'call yourselves the Royal Shakespeare Company? When did you last do Shakespeare?' And the apprentice himself, in Timothy Spall's magnificent, goofy, blundering performance, proves as capable of contemporary curse-words and tribal cries as of the kind of oafish mumbles and gurgles that effortlessly cross the centuries. Sons of whores become shitheads, forked arrows fucking arrows, and even 'The Knight of the Burning Pestle!' a West Ham football-chant.

The trouble, of course, is that this spotty yob's fantasies would be more likely to run to Roy of the Rovers than to chivalric romance. It is hardly logical that he should convert himself into a baby-faced Quixote, given to mistaking innkeepers for knights and barbers for dangerous giants; and, when he does, he lacks the vulnerability, the callow charm apparent in the original. Jacobean *double entendre* and wit mostly disappear too. The result is no more, but also no less, than an ebullient romp: slices of well formed *Merchant* cut into chunks of Spall with upended vase for helmet, dustbin-lid for shield, broom for horse, 'perilous Walthamstow' for destination, and, for company, whomever and whatever Mr Bogdanov's hectic imagination can muster, from a Soho tart to a traffic cop to a covey of prancing milkmaids. If it all strains rather too manically to keep the laughter going and avoid the repetitiveness and predictability of the original, it does at least succeed in achieving both ends to some extent, some of the time.

PETER GILL is Bogdanov's artistic opposite; and, unsurprisingly, his *Don Juan* is as visually austere as it is lucid, fluent and well-acted, notably by Nigel Terry, whose not unsympathetic Don exudes turbulent dissatisfaction with all orthodoxy, and Ron Pember a reproachful, hangdog Sganarelle, alias Leperello, Those who know their *Giovanni,* written 120 years later, will find several small surprises in Molière's handling of the story, but just one of importance. It's not murder nor blasphemy nor promiscuity that finally condemns his Juan; but hypocrisy.

Historically, this was Molière's counter-attack on his persecutors. If a Don Juan could decide that he could most effectively pursue his crimes under a pious mask, it followed that at least some of the pious were secret criminals, clandestine Juans. In effect, Tartuffe suppressed *Tartuffe.* Today, the play could be taken as the National's sly riposte to those still harassing its *Romans in Britain.* Who and what are they inside their crusaders' uniforms? It's a thought; and it doesn't need the transmogrification of Elvira into Whitehouse, the Statue into Cutler, or any other obvious updating, to make itself felt. □

FILMS

John Coleman

Decline and fall

Rough Treatment (AA) *Camden Plaza*
Union City (A) *Screen on the Green; Cinecenta*
The Incredible Shrinking Woman (A) *Plaza*
The Idolmaker (A) *London Pavilion*
Foxes (AA) *Odeon, St Martin's Lane*

It is hardly a coincidence that two of the three film people interviewed in the current issue of *Sight & Sound* on the state of Polish cinema today should have worked closely with the formidable Andrzej Wajda: Krystyna Janda had leading roles in both *Man of Marble* and *The Conductor,* and Edward Klosinski has photographed all his recent films except *Conductor.* They are courageously outspoken and none too sanguine about the immediate future. Both speak of 'disguises' — 'metaphors, allusions, ellipses and so on' — forced upon the creative artist.

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And yet there are those film-makers (Wajda, Zanussi, Kieslowski) who now and then miraculously manage to pierce the conventional veils. Wajda's *Rough Treatment* (its Polish title actually means 'Without Anaesthesia') was made in 1978, on the kicking heels of *Man of Marble*, and it must surely rank as one of his rawest and bleakest films ever. At a press conference after the premiere, he admitted:

> I worked on this film in a blind rage, paying no heed either to my appearance or my gestures. It has no flourishes. Its impact was to come solely from a logically constructed chain of events, and from the performers behind whom stands the director.

Certainly there is an unusual sense of angry personal involvement, and no doubt at all where the director's sympathies lie, as we witness the fall from grace, both domestic and professional, of a middle-aged, worldly-wise foreign correspondent and pundit, first seen being incautious on a long TV interview programme. This Michalowski (played by Zbigniew Zapasiewicz with a fine, weary knowingness soon to be punctured) returns home from a trip to find his wife Eva (Ewa Dalkowska) taking off with their little daughter. That TV show has been pre-recorded and it drags ironically on during the crucial opening action: watched by Eva and her young party-lining lover Jacek, who seems to be taking notes on it; disapproved of by the network controller; on an airport screen, and on screen as Michalowski enters their empty, dishevelled flat. It is the start of his disintegration.

As he yelps during an extraction, having self-punishingly waved aside anaesthetics, his dentist and family-friend Wanda derides the poet-lover as the sort you want to mother, tells Michalowski to get tough with Eva. And, in fact, he assures Eva's slimy lawyer: no divorce. The lawyer warns him, 'Proof's never a problem', and — more sinisterly — 'It's been my experience that guilt can be proved against any of us'. Then the desperate husband comes up against the 'patriot' Jacek over the awarding of a literary prize; later, they brawl briefly in the street. Meanwhile, his university lectures have been cancelled; after a drunken student party back at his flat, a silent girl, Agata (Krystyna Janda), just moves in. This cool creature is perhaps the one weakness of the piece, gifting herself so mysteriously. Back at his office, Michalowski finds someone else in occupation; his editor says a UN trip is off, proposes a holiday with pay. At the flat again, his charming elder daughter arrives unexpectedly from Moscow, turning out Agata, who is sitting serenely in her knickers in the exact centre of a circular mat and, as serenely, dons her jeans and leaves. She'll be back.

Then a high-level pal also falls from favour and, in a sad, funny scene, comes to borrow a tail-coat for six months, against an embassy posting abroad; the men get drunk. A little earlier, there has been bitter humour during a short re-encounter between her parents brought about by the daughter from Russia. Michalowksi berates Eva for her taste, 'falling in love with a creep like him'. 'And what are you?' replies Eva, ' . . . a coffee-house opportunist?' She might be parroting her poet and Michalowski laughs aloud. But the divorce goes ahead and the fixed court proceedings, with the wife's witnesses (mother, sister, dentist's assistant) lying their heads off, carry a ghastly charge. Prisoner in a nightmare, Michalowski simply raises his hands and leaves the room. An ambulance's siren, a burnt-out kitchen, a stretcher; and Agata, weeping, distraught, gives voice for the first and last time.

'A logically constructed chain of events,' said Wajda, and there is a terrible chronological and sequential inevitability about the whole affair. The criticism that might be offered is that it is fiercely one-sided (we learn nothing of what Eva had to put up with, what drove her away) and even self-aggrandising (the lover a pitiful 'creep' indeed, and Agata too emblematic of undemanding devotion, a kind of unearned, beautiful plus in Michalowski's favour); that 'blind rage' alone sometimes fuels the action. But hate has its place and, as a portrait of a man trying to cut through cant in a whispering, frightened society, *Rough Treatment* is painful and exemplary.

LET US now redress a balance by a swift glance at some examples of decline in the West. Oddly, the horrid-looking and insecurely acted *Union City*, a low-budget first feature by Mark Reichert set back in New Jersey in 1953, hangs on most in the memory. No one is going to persuade me that all the ineptitude (most notable in Dennis Lipscomb's off-and-on performance as a near-impotent husband who seems to have trapped and murdered a milk-thief) is deliberate; nor that such eccentrics as Irina Maleeva's loony 'Contessa' are anything but embarrassing. However, Mr Reichert — getting suggestively blank and funny walk-throughs out of pop-star Debbie Harry as Lipscomb's wife and Everett McGill as her hunky, handsome janitor-lover — somehow hands over the *feel* of cheap comic-book fiction, of that manner of time-passing nonsense whose very disposability is part of its guilty attraction. *Kinda* recommended.

Joel Schumacher's *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* sets off promisingly, in hazy pastels and affluent suburbia, with Lily Tomlin as Pat Kramer (!), wife of ad executive Vance (Charles Grodin) and a whiz at thinking up names for the chemical products he brings home to clog her kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Neighbours wave, unthinkingly promoting consumer goods from their front lawns, as she drives home from the supermarket. Then, as a result of all those chemicals, she starts shrinking and — six good jokes and perhaps two or three special effects apart — the film follows suit, importing a world-wide conspiracy and a gorilla. The best visual gag has Ms Tomlin scampering from receiver to mouthpiece of a gargantuan telephone.

Taylor Hackford's *The Idolmaker* grafts Italo-American streetwiseness on to fragments from the career of one Bob Marcucci, the ebullient New Yorker who created those Fifities pop-ups, Fabian and Frankie Avalon. Here Ray Sharkey gives his hectic all, which is quite a lot, to the parallel role of Vince, onlie begeter of Tommy Dee (Paul Land) and Caesare (Peter Gallagher). There's a wee degree of excitement in watching him mould his nonentities into pompadoured, pelvic-thrusting and *rich* nonentities. Experts tell me the music is wrong for the period. As for Adrian Lyne's *The Foxes* (1979), a generation-gap folly about flaky Los Angeles teenagers and their flaky parents, had not marvellous Jodie Foster (wry den-mother here to three other badly confused girls) suffered the recent misfortune of a crass tie-in with Reagan's would-be assasin one doubts it would ever have reached our screens. □

TELEVISION

Francis Wheen

Boxed in

THE TROUBLE with the atomic bomb is that, ever since it was discovered, there has been no chance of undiscovering it. The problem with television is much the same. Once John Logie Baird had managed to transmit moving silhouettes, we were lumbered.

A brave government might, I suppose, order the two superpowers (ITV and BBC) to sign some sort of Dross Non-Proliferation Treaty, under which no more than three hours' worth of programmes would be broadcast on each channel every week. But it seems unlikely. Both sides would mutter about 'not going naked into the conference chamber' (the idea of herds of TV executives in the altogether is actually rather an appealing one) and would hurriedly produce even more lethal weapons of destruction — *The Two Ronnies/Dick Emery Weekend Extravaganza,* perhaps, or movie-length episodes of *Crossroads.*

A more practical solution would be for viewers themselves to renounce the telly and all its works. Let us take the case of sport, and let us begin by stating two truths. First, it is always more satisfying to see sport in the flesh, as it were, than to watch it on the box. Secondly, it is always more satisfying to play a sport than to be a spectator. Cricket is a peerless game, yet when I see it on television it usually seems lifeless. Football is great fun, but on the box it appears dull.

Snooker, oddly enough, televises rather better than most games, and over the past fortnight BBC-2's daily coverage of the World Professional Snooker Championships has given us a great opportunity to wallow in it. There is a rich cast: Ray Reardon, the ex-policeman, ex-miner who always behaves like a real gent; Hurricane Higgins, the loveable bad boy; Terry Griffiths, the worried-looking Welshman who needs a good square meal; Steve Davis, the chirpy Cockney sparrer; David Taylor, 'the silver fox': stately, plump Doug Mountjoy;

Among this week's contributors:

R. W. JOHNSON's *Long March of the French Left* was published in March by Macmillan and will be reviewed in the *NS* in May following the French elections.

EDNA LONGLEY has edited an anthology of Edward Thomas's prose which will be published by Carcanet later this year.

BILL GREENWELL, stalwart of the *NS* Weekend Competition, teaches at a tertiary college in Exeter.

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and so on. There is also the incomparable Ted Lowe, a graduate of the John Arlott School for Whispering Commentators. (There is also the nauseating David Vine, but less said *in re* Vine the better.) Snooker on telly is undeniably gripping, in a way that other televised games are not, but, even so, I felt that I would have been happier making hamfisted breaks of one in my local snooker hall than staring at Mountjoy's record-breaking 145.

WHAT ELSE did the television companies produce last week to lure us into believing that they were serving a useful purpose? Well, there was *High Office* (Granada). This was the three-part series of 'hypotheticals', previewed by Peter Kellner in the *NS* a fortnight ago, in which former mandarins and former ministers pretend to answer the question 'What would you do if such-and-such happened?' *Pace* my learned colleague Kellner, I don't think that these programmes are particularly informative: after all, wily old vampires such as Sir Antony Part and Lord Greenhill would hardly appear if they thought there was any danger of their being put through a moral assault course. It was noticeable that most participants could not prevent their faces from falling into a nervous smirk — the look of people who are enjoying themselves enormously but feel that they probably shouldn't be. For experienced Whitehall plotters, programmes such as this are no more taxing than an after-dinner game of charades or a morning romp through the *Times* crossword.

Unquestionably the most bizarre and entertaining show of the week was *Paperbacks* (BBC-1), successor to *Read All About It*. Ronald Harwood, who used to present this programme, always appeared to have a strict policy of toadying to guests. Even his predecessor, Melvyn Bragg, though good in other ways, was rather too ready to give them a soft ride. Robert Kee, the new host, has obviously decided to stand no nonsense. Announcing that he had liked *Wilt* but not *The Wilt Alternative,* Kee asked Tom Sharpe: 'Do you share my dissatisfaction with it?' 'Yes I do,' said Sharpe, rather charmingly. Kee pressed on: '*Wilt* dealt with the pretentiousness in our society. Really perhaps you hadn't got anything else to say?' 'I haven't got any damn thing to say,' Sharpe protested.

By giving as good as he got — which, in this case, meant being as deliberately provocative as his host — Sharpe contrived to endear himself, and managed some memorable descriptions of his writing technique. 'One sniff of Henry James and I can't write anything for three weeks,' he moaned, adding that 'I just scrapped a novel when I got to page 188 because my wife didn't like it.'

Kee's other victim was a young Cambridge graduate called Douglas Adams, creator of a multi-media event called *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy*. 'I'm afraid I have to say the same sort of thing to you as I said to Tom Sharpe,' warned Kee, and from then on Adams was a dead duck. Also on the show were Jessica Mitford and Martin Amis, both of whom were forced, rather incongruously, to read from a teleprompter. The *Radio Times* had teasingly hinted that Martin Amis's 'strong opinions may not be shared by the other guests', but Amis's comments on his chosen subject (Nabokov, of course) were of a kind that allowed no rebuttal: he spoke of the 'opaque but glittering surface' of Nabokov's novel *The Gift*. To take issue with this would be like going 15 rounds with a bowl of blancmange.

The only other vaguely tolerable show of the week was *Antiques Roadshow* (BBC-1), starring dear old Arthur Negus, Arthur Marshall's doppelganger. Among the many intolerable programmes was a dramatised biography of the painter Mark Gertler on *Omnibus* (BBC-1). This was an inconsequential piece of Bloomsburyana, and I wasn't surprised to see that the assistant editor was called Joke Van Wijk. I shall now break my borrowed telly (well, return it to its owner) and, deeper than did ever plummet sound, I'll drown my *TV Times*.

Weekend competition

No 2665 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

April is most certainly *not* the cruellest month. Please write a sonnet pointing out the drawbacks of one of the other eleven. By 8 May.

No 2662 **Set by Snubbin**

An extract from the PR agency's confidential recommendations as to how the Social Democrats can tart up their image.

Report **By Toby Jugge**

Back from my spell in the doghouse — oh gracious Ms de Meaner, who forgivest all who do truly repent — I find myself privileged to do the honours for a right little cracker of a comp, jam-packed with fun and frolic. Some good one-liners ('Rodgers, W.: Face-lift now *absolutely imperative*' — Jim Yorke; '. . . Dr Owen's unfortunate choice of Limehouse for his residence: he should move immediately, but not to Hampstead Garden Suburb' — Maud Gracechurch) will bring two quids' worth of colour to the wallets of their authors, while the winners get nine apiece.

Shirley: Hairwise OK. But play on heightwise — no lifts to chairs — this counterproductive. Small is vulnerable is beautiful.
Jenkins: Dodgy winewise — difficult one, this — beer obviously out — port (although upmarket) has more 'fruity old eccentric' feel. Claret nambypambymost. Possible deliberate play on 'R' by speechwrights — to make Pythonesque gags — apparently fortuitouswise (eg 'wight wing wascality' OR 'wevolutionary wancour'); possibly by attracting ridicule he will gain in likeableness — a serious neg. in present persona.
Rodgers: Lowprofile this one! (Confidential!)
Owen: Wisewise very good. A touch of theatricality could rescue imagewise. (Red white and blue hankie in top pocket?) They need a song: Adaptation of zippy up-to-date Eurosong 'Making Your Mind Up'?

GERARD BENSON

Commission George-Brown to post-write cabinet diary for serialisation in *Sunday Times* etc to undo harm to Owen's and Roy's images done by Castle's same; Roy strong, plain-mannish, lunches Woolworth's cafeteria wowing waitresses, wife Cordon Bleu; Owen all smiles, loves kids, new one on way. Both wear caps — *no pipes* but clean fruit-gum or jelly-bean persona (caps clean for Tory waverers). Queen-identifying head-scarf for Shirley; curlers for *Coronation Street* North? Blake's 'Jerusalem' party anthem — 'green' vote. Owen's grand-dad for pensioners; Children's Crusade — Shirley dentist's coat — kids' teeth; 'milk Thatcher snatched'; Roy milking a cow.

GEORGE MOOR

The main difficulty, as we see it, lies in *Jenkins*. Not just the portliness of his person, but the overripeness of his whole manner (the aristo drawl, the deformed 'R's, etc.) projects an image of Edwardian grandee effeteness quite incompatible with the lean, bracing so-far-but-no-farther progressivism that is your essential middle-class selling-point. Though we are reliably assured that he rarely imbibes more than two bottles a day of his favourite tipple, there is no doubt that this 'Claret' slur clings to him as closely as the silver label slung round the neck of a decanter. Could he not just *occasionally* be photographed thirstily downing a can of Coke — filled for the nonce, if necessary, with *Château Latour*?

RUFUS STONE

A middle-of-the-road party needs a middle-brow, middle-class, middle-aged image, so use Miss Mitford's list of non-U words (see glossary, make Jenkins avoid all 'R's in every month). Clothes are best tweedy, and perhaps some leaders could smoke pipes (probably best if Mrs Williams avoids this one). Dogs arouse feelings of reliability, especially spaniels and other gun-dogs (but avoid corgis as these have already been bagged!). Be seen at popular entertainments with selected members of your families — football matches, Miss World contests, recordings of *Coronation Street*. Casual pictures of members with low-brow idols (Kevin Keegan, Jimmy Young, Michael Aspel). Avoid culture such as opera.

E.O. PARROTT

A two-pronged offensive is called for.
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P.W.R. FOOT

Social Democratic Party is a bit of a mouthful — but beware of unfortunate contractions (e.g. SODEM).

We're working on possible slogans: 'Heydiddle-diddle, we're Right in the Middle'. 'EurO.K. with Roy'. 'Roy's the Boy'. 'Shirl's the Girl'. (But opposition might retort with 'That's Shirl That Was') Dr Owen's 'fudge and mudge' was very nearly a winner — trouble is, people might think it applied to *him*. Can you persuade Gerry Fitt to join you? If so, we've got a natural: 'Fitt to Govern'. Other possibilities: 'Right of Foot and Left of Steel, SDP — the Big New Deal'. 'Set Yourself Free with the SDP'. (We like this; sounds good and commits you to nothing.) For use in Scotland: 'Gang wi' us'.

Suggest working lunch, Savoy Grill, Thursday, one o'clock, to consider above and other ideas.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Sorry no room for crossword this week. It will be back in the next issue.

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ALDWYCH THEATRE Royal Shakespeare Company. 836 6404. Recorded booking info 836 5332 cc. 379 6233. 'Nicholas Nickleby'. All perfs sold out. But seats now available for 'Knight of The Burning Pestle' (next perf 4 May). RSC also at The Warehouse (836 6808) in premiere production 'Outskirts' by Hanif Kureishi and 'Naked Robots' by Jonathan Gems. R&C also at Piccadilly in Willy Russell's hilarious 'Educating Rita'.

GARRICK. S&CC. Charing Cross Road. MIKE LEIGH'S SMASH HIT **'GOOSE-PIMPLES' 'THIS IS A TERRIBLY FUNNY PLAY STRONGLY RECOMMENDED' — James Fenton, Sunday Times.** 'A VICIOUS COMEDY THAT IS FUNNY EVEN WHEN IT HURTS' — Milton Shulman, New Standard. 'GREAT ENTERTAINMENT, A SUPREMELY TALENTED CAST' — Clive Hirschorn, Sunday Express. Opens 29 April. Box Office 01-836 4601. Group sales 01-379 6061.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. Olivier (open stage) Fri/Sat 'Man & Superman'. Theatre closed for maintenance till 13 May. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'The Elephant Man', 'Measure for Measure'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'Don Juan'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

OLD VIC. 928 7616. cc 261 1821 'S'. Last perfs 24 April 7.30 & 25 April 2 & 7.30. Prunella Scales and Timothy West in 'The Merchant of Venice'.

THEATRE GOERS — *please note:* cc — credit cards; S-Student standby.

WHITEHALL. cc Box Office tel. 930 6692/7765 credit card sales. **Whitehall's latest farce:**

'ANYONE FOR DENIS?'

by JOHN WELLS, directed by DICK CLEMENT

starring: JOHN CATER, NICHOLAS FARRELL, EDWARD FOX, JOHN NETTLETON, JOAN SANDERSON, ANGELA THORNE, JOHN WELLS, JEFFRY WICKHAM.

Reduced price previews from 28 April. Opens with performances at 3 p.m. & 8.15 p.m. on 7 May.

Opera

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, EC1. *Tel.* 01-837 1672/1673/3856. Credit Cards 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 01-278 0871. 27 April to 2 May. Kent Opera. Evs at 7.30 27 & 30 April Falstaff/Verdi, 28 April & 1 May Baroque Double Bill. 29 April & 2 May Cosi fan Tutte/Mozart. Tkts £2 to £9.

Exhibitions

'DON'T SELL YOUR ASS TO THE RULING CLASS' by G. R. Levin. Exhibition 23 April-17 May, Tues.-Fri. 2-6, Sats. 11-2. Ltd (500) Edition Colour Poster £3.50 post free. Pentonville Gallery, 46 Amwell St, London EC1. 01-837 9826.

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JUSTICE IN JAILS

A one-day conference on Prisoners Rights organised by the

National Council for Civil Liberties

Speakers include:— Al Bronstein, veteran lawyer and campaigner on prisoners rights in the USA; John McVicar; Alf Dubs M.P.; Bob Kilroy-Silk M.P.

10 a.m. Saturday 9 May 1981
at Polytechnic of Central London,
35 Marylebone Road, London NW1.

Booking forms from 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1. Fee £3.

HISTORY WORKSHOP LONDON SEMINAR
Tim Mason (Oxford)

'WORKERS IN NAZI GERMANY'

Friday 8 May 7.30 p.m.-9.30 p.m.
(N.B. CHANGE OF DATE)

at **'Bull and Mouth' (upstairs), Bury Place, WC1 (2 mins. from British Museum).**

BURY THE NAZIS

On 7 May with the Board of Deputies' anti-National Front leaflets. Five hard-hitting leaflets to choose from. For free samples write to: **Defender Publications Ltd, Woburn House, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1.**

Meetings

A SANE SOCIETY. Public meeting organised by The Socialist Party of Great Britain. Monday 27 April, 8.15 p.m. at Muswell Hill Library, Queen's Avenue, London N10. Discussion. All welcome.

ICA EVENTS, The Mall, London SW1. 28 April 1.00 Salman Rushdie discusses his book Midnight's Children with Marina Warner, author of Alone Of All Her Sex; 29 April 7.30 Documenting the Arts I: The Independent Filmmaker and the Arts Council; 30 April 1.00 Marghanita Laski, chairman of Arts Council Literature Panel, discusses the aims of public subsidy for Literature. Tkts £1.00. 930 3647.

LORD FENNER BROCKWAY on 'My Friendship with GBS', Shaw Society, Fri. 1 May at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Lecture 7 p.m.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE Sunday lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries 06285 26464.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sun. 26 April 8 p.m. Open Q/A Meeting. 'Psychic Powers and Hazards'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

TALK BY JIM FINE, Quaker Representative based in Jerusalem, on 'Current Developments in the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli Conflict' on Tuesday 28 April at 6.30 p.m. at Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1. Admission Free.

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE GREEN. 226 3520. Bruce Springsteen in 'No Nukes' (A). 3 p.m., 5 p.m., 7 p.m., & 9 p.m.

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INDUSTRIAL HISTORY catalogues issued. A. C. Hall, 30 Staines Rd, Twickenham, Middx.

BLOCK

Materialist analyses of art and visual culture: contributions from John Berger, T. J. Clark, Toni del Renzio, Nicos Hadjinicolaou, Stuart Hood, John Heskett, Lisa Tickner, et al, on such themes as politics and representation, propaganda, women and art, design history, etc.

Details from: Art History Dept. Middlesex Polytechnic, Cat Hill, Cockfoster, Herts. 01-440 7431

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